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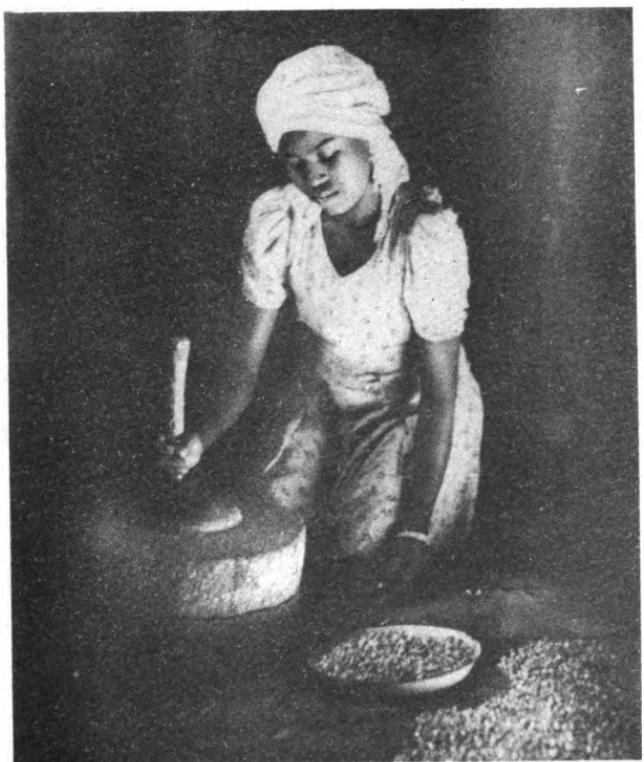






# Mauritius

## 1946



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# ANNUAL REPORT ON MAURITIUS

## FOR THE YEAR 1946

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LONDON: HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE  
1948

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The cover illustration shows  
a Creole girl grinding maize

(Photograph by Lt.-Col. J. Bryant, R.A.M.C.)

## PART I

### Chapter I: General Review of the Period 1939 to 1945

The last Annual Report on Mauritius was for the year 1938 and since the present report relates to the year 1946, the object of this section is to bridge the gap between 1938 and 1946 by means of a brief account of "trends and tendencies." From the economic point of view Mauritius depends almost entirely on the amount of sugar produced annually and the price received for it. The revenues of Government, the wages of labour and the prosperity of the Island are governed by the rhythm of the sugar crop. When the war began in September, 1939, Mauritius was beginning to climb out of the trough of economic depression which had persisted throughout the thirties. Japan did not enter the war until December, 1941, and the war in Europe seemed to be a long way off. The fall of France—the spiritual home of many people in Mauritius—and the evacuation of the British army from Dunkirk brought the thunder of war nearer but did not shake the confidence of Mauritians in the ultimate victory of the British Empire. In the meantime, the rhythm of the sugar crop continued. The food supply of the Island—mainly rice from overseas—was not threatened. With enthusiastic loyalty the Colony placed its men and material at the disposal of His Majesty. A Defence Scheme was put into operation. Various controls for security purposes were imposed. It was recognised that the greatest contribution the Colony could make to the war effort of the Empire was to produce the maximum amount of sugar and other raw materials, to conserve existing supplies and to make the minimum demand on shipping and other services requiring imperial manpower. The people of Mauritius were solidly behind His Majesty's Government and gave practical expression to their loyalty by means of loans and gifts for a variety of war purposes. They assumed the additional financial and other burdens and restrictions of war with equanimity. The administration of Sir Bede Clifford, the Governor of the day, had, long before the outbreak of war, built up a large supply of petrol, a far greater supply of coal and a considerable supply of rice and other essential commodities.

Perhaps the worst effect of the war in Mauritius was the fact that it held up development and reform of every kind. The administration and the Legislature were fully alive to the necessity of improving the health and education of the people and of developing the agriculture and industries of the Island. In February, 1940,

His Majesty's Government restated their colonial policy and confirmed their intention to increase considerably the monies to be made available by the Imperial Treasury for economic development and social welfare. Soon afterwards the war entered a new and more intense phase and the Imperial Government were therefore unable to give practical effect to their intentions. Nevertheless the mere statement of His Majesty's Government at such a time of storm and stress gave encouragement and hope to the administration and people of Mauritius. Sir Bede Clifford had already taken a keen personal interest in the agricultural and industrial development of the island and had elaborated a comprehensive and progressive scheme for developing the irrigation and hydro-electric resources of the Colony. But the social problems of Mauritius had seemed insoluble owing to lack of money. It was now felt that there was a solution and the administration began to think and to plan more hopefully.

The history of Mauritius between 1939 and 1946 falls naturally into two periods : from the outbreak of the war until the entry of Japan, or rather the fall of Singapore, and from that critical event onwards until the end of the war. These two periods happened to coincide roughly with the administrations of two Governors Sir Bede Clifford and Sir Donald Mackenzie-Kennedy. During the first period the Island gradually settled down to the realisation of the burdens and restrictions of war. Remote in the Indian Ocean and protected by the Royal Navy, the people of Mauritius went about their lawful occasions by land and sea. The fall of France filled them with gloom, but not with despair. They were proud and thrilled by the attitude of Britain when she stood alone against the three corners of the world. They felt themselves one with the people of England and when the sky was falling over London and Plymouth, over Coventry, Birmingham and Hull searched their hearts for ways whereby they could help. Their cry was always "only tell us what we can do and we will do it." A little thing, perhaps, but the first mobile canteen on the streets of London in the winter of 1940-41 was given by the children of Mauritius. A squadron of Spitfires was bought by private subscription and presented to His Majesty's Government in gratitude to the men who fought in the Battle of Britain. A motor transport unit and a pioneer unit were raised for service in the field. The pioneers suffered serious casualties in the Libyan desert and so the war brought sorrow and anxiety to the hearths and homes of poor people in Mauritius.

As the war continued, fewer ships came to the Island and the revenue of the Colony began to fall and the expenditure to rise on account of emergency services. The Council of Government, supported by the whole population, cheerfully voted the additional taxation required to meet the new situation. In order to show their solidarity with Government, the Council of Government

voted the estimates of 1940-41 without discussion and repeated this gesture in the following year.

With the fall of France in 1940, His Majesty's Government had braced themselves to a further intensification of the war effort and appealed to the dependencies to follow suit. There was to be only one objective—to win the war. In Mauritius, the production of sugar was to be raised to the maximum; existing stocks of goods in the Island were to be conserved in order to save shipping; the growing of food was to be encouraged, and existing manpower was to be used to the utmost in order to save drawing on imperial manpower from overseas. His Majesty's Government recognised that concentration of the war effort would necessarily involve deferring, and in some cases curtailing development and welfare services, but hoped that wherever it could be done without detriment to the main objective effort, such services would continue. Where the question of continuation was only one of money, His Majesty's Government appealed to Colonies to increase local taxation for that purpose.

The appeal of His Majesty's Government did not fall on deaf ears. The Colony responded readily and loyally to every call made on its money and its men for war purposes. The inevitable postponement of the reforming of the social services was accepted with equanimity, but planning for the future did not altogether cease. In 1939, the Council of Government had already approved a special salary for a period of three years in order to attract a first class educationalist from abroad to study the educational needs of the Island and to make recommendations to fulfil those needs. The new Director of Education arrived in 1940, and, after surveying the situation, produced a report now generally referred to as the Ward Report. This report was published in November, 1941, and began to produce a marked effect on public opinion. Soon after the arrival of Sir Donald Mackenzie-Kennedy in 1942 it was found possible to take effective action on this report.

The planning of economic projects also continued during 1940, when a Committee sat and considered a programme for the rehabilitation of the Colony's assets, for development in its widest sense and for the improvement of the social conditions of the population. With these ends in view the Committee recommended to Government the adoption of a number of projects, chief among which were the reform of the educational system, the institution of a nutrition survey, the control of the moth-borer pest of sugar cane, the *cordia macrostachya* control scheme, the appointment of a marine biologist, the construction of a new tobacco warehouse, the local production of edible oil, the visit of a technical adviser on timber utilisation and preservative treatment and the visit of a sanitary engineer to advise on sewage disposal at Curepipe. The report was produced in 1940, and although it was not possible

to take effective action on the Committee's recommendations, their labours were not wasted since they were later used as the foundations for some of the plans which ultimately took shape in 1944.

In short, although the activities of the administration became more and more concentrated on war during the later period of Sir Bede Clifford's governorship, a great deal of quiet thinking on education, health and purely economic development was done.

Not only was social and economic development held up by the war but political development also. Before the arrival of Sir Bede Clifford in 1937, the reform of the constitution had been in the mind of successive Secretaries of State for some time, and in the mind of the people of Mauritius for a generation. The Governor gave the question serious thought and discussed it with the Secretary of State, but the deepening gravity of the war, the necessity of concentrating on the main issues and of avoiding all distractions, prevented any further consideration being given to it. On the initiative of the Governor, the life of the Council of Government was extended by Letters Patent for a period not exceeding three years from January, 1941. He expressed the hope at that time that a new legislature would be elected on the basis of a new constitution before the end of three years. That was no doubt a reasonable hope at the time of its expression but in December, 1941, Japan entered the war, and in February, 1942, Singapore fell and the Japanese began to advance across the Indian Ocean in a westerly direction. Mauritius, which had been so safe and secure from the distant war, now felt threatened and isolated and immediately began to intensify defensive measures with the object of repelling the enemy if he attempted to land and of harrying him if he succeeded in landing. Now that the lines of communication in the Indian Ocean were threatened, it became imperative to make the Island as independent as possible of imported foodstuffs. In normal times, the whole of the staple food of the Island, mainly rice, is imported from India and Burma. With the co-operation of the Chamber of Agriculture a scheme was drawn up for the planting by sugar estates of one fifth of their lands with starchy food crops, such as maize, manioc and sweet potatoes.

At this critical stage of the war, Sir Bede Clifford was transferred to the governorship of Trinidad and Sir Donald Mackenzie-Kennedy was appointed to succeed him as the Governor of Mauritius. The Japanese overran Malaya and Burma. They hammered at the gates of India and, at the time of the new Governor's arrival were, in his words, "just over the horizon." The Governor's immediate task was to speed up and intensify all defence measures to prevent, if possible, the Island from falling into the power of the enemy. For more than a year, strongly supported by the legislature and the administration, the Governor continued to concentrate on war measures. Military forces for service in the Island and over-

seas were raised ; security measures were tightened up ; the growing of starchy food crops was undertaken on a large scale and measures were taken to ensure a proper distribution of the limited food supplies and to keep down the cost of living for the poorer sections of the population. At his first meeting with the Council of Government the Governor recognised the powerful aid given by the Council of Government to his predecessors in having voted without discussion estimates which included heavy additional taxation. He expressed the hope that they would soon be able to return to the normal procedure of the legislature with its full and public discussion of all important political and financial measures and that the ancient dignity of the legislature would be upheld by a restoration of peacetime forms and ceremonies. In pursuit of the policy of devolving more and more responsibility for the management of public business on unofficial persons, the Governor reconstituted the Standing Finance Committee a few months after his arrival by removing all officials therefrom except the Chairman and his deputy. The Committee now consists of the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary and all the unofficial members of the Council of Government. The Committee has continued to work efficiently and smoothly from 1942 until the present time. Early in 1943, there was a change in the unofficial membership of the Executive Council. The two retiring members had served for many years and the object of the change was to give as many unofficial persons as possible experience in the management of public affairs. This change coincided with the addition of a third unofficial member to the Executive Council in the person of one of the nominated Indian members of the Council of Government.

At the instance of the Governor the draft estimates for 1943-44 were thoroughly discussed by the Standing Finance Committee and fully debated in the Council of Government. This procedure has been followed every year since then and the consequent free and frank discussion of important questions has produced good results both in the legislature and on the public mind.

In accordance with this procedure, the fullest use has been made of Select Committees for the purpose of hammering out lines of policy in important matters. Discussion in Select Committees is a slow process, but in a Colony where there are so many divergent views and interests it is a useful method of educating and creating public opinion. The value of this method was demonstrated in the matter of educational reform. The publication of the Ward Report, mentioned in paragraph 6, precipitated a storm of controversy during which it was not feasible to take a clear line in any direction. But after the report had been studied by a Select Committee, appointed in 1942, the storm subsided and the Committee, which was representative of all sections of opinion in the

Island, adopted almost unanimously all the principal recommendations made in the report.

The neighbouring French colonies, Madagascar and Réunion, which had adhered to the Vichy Government, were occupied by the Free French Forces in 1942. From that time onwards, although war measures were continued, the administration began to think more and more about other matters. During the crop season of 1943, a strike on a sugar estate in the North led to an unfortunate clash between the strikers and the police in which three persons lost their lives. In 1944 occurred a cyclone, and this was followed in 1945 by three others of devastating intensity. These cyclones were succeeded by an epidemic of poliomyelitis, commonly called infantile paralysis.

Apart from these extraordinary events, the history of Mauritius from the middle of 1943 onwards records an effort to cope with the real problems of the Island and an attempt to enlist the active support of the public from the highest to the lowest in that effort. The fundamental problems of the Island are the improvement and extension of education, especially primary education, the eradication of malaria, anaemia, dysentery, hookworm and other tropical diseases, and the raising of the standards of health by improved sanitation, water supplies, housing, nutrition and social services. On the purely economic side, the problems are the development of subsidiary industries, such as the tea industry, dairying and cattle raising, and the creation of a class of peasant proprietors and small holders engaged in growing food. On the political side, the problems are the closer association of the whole population with the work of Government. The constant aim and endeavour of the Government has been to encourage people to do things for themselves by stimulating the growth of local government in the rural areas. It has insisted that, while improvements in health and education are essential, they cannot be imposed on the population. However energetic Government may be in its long-term planning for these improvements, they will ultimately fail unless they are earnestly and sincerely desired by the people concerned. It is for this reason that Government is fostering the growth of local government, which before 1943 hardly existed outside the Municipality of Port Louis and the three township Boards of Curepipe, Quatre Bornes and Beau Bassin—Rose Hill. The whole field of local government has been surveyed by an experienced officer from England and his report is under continuous study by Government. A Commission of Enquiry appointed in 1943 in connection with the incident mentioned in the previous paragraph drew attention to the fact that, apart from the police, there were no Government officers actually living among the people in the rural districts. This fact was obvious to every administrator who visited the Island and was again emphasised by the successive cyclones of 1945. This defect in the administration has since

been remedied by the creation of Civil Commissioners whose first duty will be the encouragement of local self-government.

Government has also been anxious to enlist the assistance of all sections of the population in the submission of proposals for the reform of the constitution of the Colony, with a view to making the legislature much more representative by enlarging the electorate and by increasing the number of elected and unofficial members. The war prevented any overt steps being taken in that direction but did not interrupt the planning which had continued since the question was discussed between the Governor and the Secretary of State's personal adviser in 1943. It had been hoped in 1944 that the Secretary of State would be able to spare the services of a constitutional lawyer to visit the Colony and make recommendations for a new constitution after personally investigating the local situation, but as this proved impracticable the Governor himself devised a scheme. This scheme was thoroughly discussed over a period of months by a Consultative Committee under the chairmanship of the Governor before he left for England in May, 1945. Finally the scheme was discussed in London by the Governor and the Secretary of State and his advisers in the latter half of 1945 and when the Governor returned at the beginning of 1946 he was expecting draft proposals to arrive before long. They have now been received and are being discussed.

As already explained, Government's determination to secure a new legislature, fully representative of all classes and interests, is but one aspect of the campaign to associate the people more closely with the work of the administration and to encourage everyone to take an intelligent interest in the affairs of the Colony, so that the legislators will be compelled to take account of a vigilant and critical public opinion. It is the hope of Government that such opinion will support its social and economic programme and thus strengthen the hand of the legislature when it comes to the hard task of providing the necessary funds.

#### DEVELOPMENT & WELFARE

The passage of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 was one of the most important events of the years under review. During the years of stringency, monies voted under the 1929 Act had been exhausted and the finances of the Colony were not in a state to encourage embarkation on development projects. The Act of 1940 gave impetus to renewed thoughts on the subject, though the over-riding concern of Government at this time was naturally defence.

In February, 1944, however, when the invasion of Europe was foreseen and the end of the war in that theatre could reasonably be anticipated, the idea of a co-ordinated campaign of development and welfare was expressed in a memorandum by the Governor-

This postulated a large and representative committee charged with the duty of suggesting, considering, framing and supervising the execution of social measures and economic development. At the same time, a small administrative staff was set up under a Secretary for Development and Welfare whose wholetime duties were to be in connection with planning.

Another important measure directly related to the drawing up of any administrative plan was the creation of a statistical branch.

Monies available under the 1940 Act were devoted to essential spade-work—a census of the population, a survey of malaria, research in connexion with fisheries and agriculture—all objectives which would provide information instrumental in subsequent planning.

One project launched at this time was, however, rather different from the other preparatory schemes. This was the conception of a training college for teachers. It has long been appreciated that the improvement and extension of education is a necessary concomitant of advance in other fields such as health, sanitation, local government and political development. The first requirement of an education programme is the provision of teachers. Accordingly, in the full realization that sound education is expensive, but with faith in its necessity, a plan was prepared for producing primary school teachers trained in the wide knowledge of all that should be implied by primary education.

So much for the administration of development and welfare between the years 1938 and 1945. While a general pattern was taking shape and individual schemes were being drawn up, shelved, abandoned or recommended for early implementation by the Central Committee, all possible encouragement was being given to the beginnings of local government in rural areas. Social welfare is a name for one of the normal functions of government. It has not been a prominent function in Mauritius because the Government has been highly centralised. Thus the only official manifestations of social welfare have been through the departments directly responsible, viz. Education, Health, Public Works, each in itself highly centralised.

Hence, the most important step in social welfare was the introduction of district administration, but during the period under review this step had not been taken and the ground was being prepared by encouraging the inhabitants of villages to form councils and exert their own energies in improving the conditions of village life. The bad cyclones of 1945 were a test which showed to their neighbours the advantages possessed by those villages which had some articulate organisation capable of self-help. Such villages were naturally the ones to which it was most repaying to direct the assistance of Government departments.

It would be rash to assert that those village councils now in

existence are a firm foundation for responsible local government. They have been fostered with this end in view, but even the villages in Mauritius do not contain homogenous communities. Where a village council thrives it is always found that some outstanding individual holds the reins of the committee. If this individual happens to go away, the old factions reassert themselves and manoeuvres for position ensue between Hindus and Moslems and Christians. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that there is in the rural areas an increasing awareness of how much can be achieved by self-help and there is confidence that Government intends to help first those villages which attempt to help themselves.

This awareness is a pre-requisite of any extension of local government, and such an extension of local government is an essential counterpart to the plans for development which must proceed *pari passu* with the improvement of the conditions of living.

#### LABOUR; INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS; TRADE UNIONISM

In 1938, before the war began, the administration had already taken legislative and administrative steps to improve industrial relations and the conditions of labour in the Island. The effect of the war was to speed up and make manifest the latent tendencies of the labour movement.

The labour history of the war years in Mauritius is contained in the three words, work, wages and food. There was always a demand for labour, wages were rising, but an adequate supply of food was not always available. At first the war affected Mauritius rather as it must have affected neutral countries ; prices began to rise and new projects were few, but the bitterness of the struggle seemed to be remote from the daily round of life. In 1939 there had been a poor crop of sugar, so that early in 1940 steps had to be taken to find work for the dockside labourers. Time was also found to appoint committees to consider social insurance and hours of work for shop-clerks. The crop was better in 1940, and, since the cost of living had been rising, an increase of wages for agricultural workers was granted by the employers, provided the labourer attended work at least 5 days out of 6 per week. As a result of the increased cost of harvesting a larger sugar-crop, the wage bill was nearly one and a half million rupees more than in 1939, i.e., an expansion of 20 per cent. Most of this would be earned either by the regular worker himself or by members of his family. During 1941 unemployment again became acute, but this time amongst the class of persons with a smattering of education who are unwilling to do manual work but are not sufficiently instructed to compete for the higher posts except when there is a boom. The steady rise in the cost of living led to a further increase in the wage of the agricultural labourer. As these labourers form the bulk of the employed persons in the colony, any rise in their wages has

to be followed almost immediately by a corresponding increase in the wages of other manual workers. The sugar crop was still better than in 1940, and there were no strikes. Recruitment for a Pioneer Corps was begun, which solved the unemployment problem of dockside labourers, and an occupational register was compiled in order to assess the manpower of the colony. The labour law was modified by making picketing legal in certain conditions and by making a strike or lock-out legal after ten days of conciliation instead of thirty days. The minimum wage based on the then cost of living and promulgated in the Moka district in 1939 was in 1941 extended to the whole colony. The increases in wage-rates on account of the increases in the cost of living were not part of the minimum wage but were granted by the employers. The unions hardly come into the picture at all; sugar was badly required for the war effort, and interest was chiefly concentrated on the effort to produce as much sugar as possible.

The entry of Japan into the war at the end of 1941 radically altered the situation. After the fall of Singapore, Mauritius was nearly in the front line and measures had to be taken accordingly. Imperial defence necessitated works of different kinds, the demand for labour increased and imperial funds were not stinted. At the same time imports were restricted, part of the labour force had to be turned to growing foodstuffs and the sugar crop, thanks to a new variety of cane, was excellent. The demand for labour was therefore keen, wages increased, but the buying power of wages declined. Rationing had to be introduced, national service registration had to be extended, the number of mouths to be fed increased, and the available manpower had to be carefully calculated. Out of a population of four hundred and forty thousand, one hundred thousand males were registered between the ages of sixteen and fifty. Recruitment of a civil labour corps was begun and lorries sent in search of workers were brought under control.

On the other hand, industrial relations had begun to deteriorate. Although wages had risen again, the cost of living had risen faster still. Many articles were not merely expensive, they were unobtainable. The basic food, rice, had to be exchanged for flour and it was maintained that, although in food value flour might be cheaper than rice, yet the accompanying foods necessary to make the flour palatable were much more expensive than in the case of rice; further, that rice was much more filling. An inquiry showed that the average agricultural labourer was working only 24 hours a week and at the same time excise returns pointed to a substantial increase in the consumption of alcohol. Indeed, it was obvious that drunkenness was on the increase, both in the towns and in the villages. The decrease in hours worked and the increase in the consumption of rum probably indicated that the average worker was earning as much as he wished to spend on the articles available, but this did not indicate that he had all he wanted.

In 1943 the demand for manpower continued, and the resources of the Colony had to be examined even more closely. A manpower board was set up, the defence services were required to submit monthly returns giving the number of men employed, and agreed wages were worked out for the different categories of worker. The Mauritius Labour Corps was created by statute and its members were brought under a quasi-military discipline. Not a few of them, when released after some months of steady work, either volunteered to continue in the corps or found employment for themselves of their own accord. Supplies of rice ceased altogether and the house-wife had to be taught by demonstration units how to make the best use of flour—the Indo-Mauritian as a rule made a kind of pancake out of it and ate it with vegetables and condiments. Absenteeism, however, persisted.

A Labour Advisory Board was appointed in March by administrative order. It did not contain any trade-unionists, but certain persons representative of the workers were on the board, as well as employers and Government servants. Under its terms of appointment, the board was required to advise the Governor on any labour question referred to it. A qualified Factory Inspector was attached to the Labour Department; regulations for the safety of workers had already been passed and he soon made his presence felt. The number of accidents was strikingly reduced. Towards the end of 1943 a Reabsorption Advisory Committee began its work of replacing ex-servicemen in civil employment. The labour law was further amended so that the purposes of industrial associations could no longer be regarded as criminal or unlawful merely because they might be considered to be in restraint of trade. At the same time the liability under the existing law for interfering with another person's business, provided such interference was in contemplation or furtherance of an industrial dispute, was reserved. No industrial association or member of an industrial association had ever been attacked on these grounds in Mauritius, but at any rate Mauritian law had been brought into line with the English law on this subject. The right to form associations was also extended not only to members of scheduled trades but also to any undertaking, industry, trade or occupation, including the public services.

This legislation followed on new signs of life in the trade-union movement, particularly amongst town workers. Amongst agricultural workers, those who worked on a daily basis and who formed the bulk of the sugar industry employees, had succeeded in obtaining rises in pay corresponding in some measure to the rise in the cost of living, but the wages of those paid on a monthly basis had lagged behind. A minimum wage had been fixed by law and further rises had been granted by some employers, but the legal minimum had not been sufficiently increased and some employers

refused to grant further rises on the ground that this merely encouraged further absenteeism or rum drinking. The result was sporadic strikes on those estates which employed an unusually large number of hands by the month. At the meetings of the conciliation boards that were set up, the employers agreed to considerable increases in wages, but the struggle had become embittered and some sabotage occurred in the sugar factories concerned. Police protection had to be used and just when it seemed that a settlement was about to be reached, a small incident caused a "flare-up" and battle was joined between a small party of armed police and a section of the strikers. Three lives were lost on the side of the workers and a commission of enquiry was at once appointed. Pending its report, the Labour Advisory Board was asked to advise on a minimum wage for the agricultural worker : it not only increased the basic wage but added a 30 per cent war bonus. The wage so granted was not substantially different from that which had been gained from the conciliation boards. Since that unhappy incident, and probably as a result thereof, strikes have taken place in quite a different atmosphere and though the men's leaders have been no less determined to win their struggle and the police have been no less determined to preserve law and order, no clashes have resulted or have seemed likely to result between the police and the strikers.

Though it was soon apparent that the sugar crop for 1944 would be a poor one, the Labour Advisory Board, after examining the cost of living, recommended a thirty per cent regularity bonus during the crop season in addition to the previous minimum wage for agricultural labourers. Overtime was fixed at time and a third. The Controller of Supplies also arranged for the distribution of an extra ration of flour to estate labourers after the difficulties of providing cooked food for the different gangs scattered in the fields had been proved not worth the benefit to the labourers concerned. A further step towards improved industrial relations was the institution of an Industrial Court. The Mauritian who presided over this court had a thorough knowledge of the customs and language of the agricultural labourer and held frequent sittings in different parts of the Island. Formalities were not allowed to prevent him from weighing the justice of each case, and every worker now felt that he had within his reach a cheap, speedy and sympathetic hearing by a court of law. The result of all these measures was that the crop of 1944 was harvested without any difficulties. Minimum wages were also promulgated for bakers, printers and shop clerks. In each case the Labour Advisory Board made its recommendation to the Governor in Executive Council after having itself enquired into the conditions in each trade and after having heard the evidence of representatives of the workers concerned. Towards the end of this year Mr. J. E. Anquetil, a Mauritian who had travelled widely and had held an official position in an English

trade-union for some years, proposed to found an artisans' union that should embrace the whole of Mauritius. He pointed out that the total number of artisans was not very large and that if they were divided into local trade-unions, as in the past, experience showed that they always failed for lack of funds. A single union catering for all the skilled workers employed in the thirty odd sugar mills of Mauritius could, of course, immobilise the whole industry by declaring a strike and thereby threaten the ruin of Mauritius. Nevertheless, the Government preferred to face this risk rather than discourage trade-unionism, and Mr. Anquetil was assured of sympathy as long as the union conformed to the law. He therefore set about the formation of this union at once and immediately achieved considerable success. Unfortunately, in spite of having been advised to wait until his first union was firmly established, he tried at the same time to build up an agricultural workers' union to cover the whole island. This attempt led him into many difficulties including a collision with the Hindu priest who had appointed himself to watch over the interests of the labourers in the North. It was thought that Mr. Anquetil was attempting to wrest away the powers of the Indo-Mauritian leaders while he had to try to work through them. The results were not satisfactory and the extra burdens that were thus laid on his shoulders distracted him from the task of organising those workers who were more ripe for trade-unionism. The Dock, Wharves and Harbour Workers' Association came to a deadlock with the employers whilst trying to negotiate a new agreement for 1944 and for the first time in Mauritian history the dispute was referred to arbitration. A judge of the High Court was appointed as arbitrator and, although he had to invent his own court rules and had no precedents for procedure, he made a very careful enquiry and gave a decision which all parties accepted.

The year 1945 began with a catastrophe. A cyclone of unusual violence swept over the Island, destroying houses and damaging the food crops very seriously. The housing situation, already difficult, became acute owing to lack of materials which hampered repair. For a time the wages of masons, builders and carpenters reached remarkable heights. During this time Mr. Anquetil and his artisans' union gave great help to the Government in making a census of the skilled workers available for house-repair. Mr. Anquetil also exhorted members to do their best for the poorer householders, even though they could not pay the current wage. The membership of the Labour Advisory Board was almost completely renewed; Mr. Anquetil was one of the new members and so was the president of the Moka Agricultural Labourers' Association. There were also two women (one a school teacher) and a small planter as well as estate managers, a representative of the Chamber of Agriculture, a representative of journalism and a dock-

side employer. This new board appointed a sub-committee composed entirely of workers and employers in the sugar industry, with a Government labour officer as chairman, to make recommendations for a minimum wage for agricultural workers. This time the total amount was not increased, but half-pay during illness was recommended and duly made law by the Governor in Executive Council. The artisans' union (Technical and Mechanical Workers' Union) made its own agreement with the sugar industry, Mr. Anquetil pointing out that he had reduced his demands on account of the damage inflicted by the cyclone. The Chamber of Agriculture obtained statutory sanction for a contributory pension scheme covering all those in regular employment on sugar estates and not receiving less than a fixed amount in salary. Government does not contribute to this scheme as it only applies to a certain section of employees. The Government Servants' Union was organised at this time by a Labour Inspector, but not in his official capacity. It was functioning in time to give evidence before a Commission of four persons, including two from outside the colony, set up to advise regarding salary and general conditions for Government servants. The minimum age for children in industry was raised from 14 to 15 and in agriculture from 10 to 12. Hours of work for shop assistants were limited to 54 a week and closing hours were fixed. The title of Director of Labour was changed to that of Labour Commissioner in order to conform with the practice in other colonies. A special statistical branch was added to the Labour Department, and its staff works in close collaboration with the Central Statistical Bureau. In May, Mr. Kenneth Baker, a former president of the English Fire Brigade Union, arrived in Mauritius as adviser to the Governor on trade unions. He was given an office in the Labour Department and soon made his presence felt to the advantage of those trade unionists who were willing to learn from the experience of English trade unions. There were some, however, who wished to go their own way, remote though it seemed from ordinary trade union practice, and there were others who felt, perhaps, that some of their glory was departing from them and wished to assert themselves in and out of season. Nevertheless trade unionism as a whole decidedly benefited from the presence of a full time Government officer with practical working experience.

Mauritius performed one service for His Majesty's Government during the war which is worthy of special mention. In 1940 the peace of the Middle East was threatened by the attempts of numbers of Jews to enter Palestine illegally. In pursuit of their policy of controlling immigration, His Majesty's Government were obliged to deport such illegal immigrants but the difficulty was where to send them. Towards the end of 1940, His Majesty's Government appealed to the Government of Mauritius to assist them in their task of giving asylum to a considerable number of European Jews.

who, seeking refuge from their Nazi oppressors, were attempting illegally to enter Palestine. The Government and people of Mauritius promptly responded to that appeal and on the 27th December, 1940, 1,580 detainees arrived in the Colony. The policy of Government was to make the Detainment Camp as far as practicable a self-governing community under the guidance and supervision of the Commandant and his officers and to enable the detainees to live as normal a life as possible. The detainees left the Island for Palestine in August, 1945.

## Chapter II: General Review of the Year 1946

Sir Donald Mackenzie-Kennedy returned to the Colony on the 3rd January after an absence of about seven months, part of which was spent in discussions in London with the Secretary of State's advisers and other interested persons on every aspect of the administration and life of the Colony. At the first meeting of the Council of Government on the 8th January, the Governor took the opportunity of giving a brief account on his stewardship during his absence from the Colony.

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BY HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT TO THE SUGAR INDUSTRY OF MAURITIUS**

This question naturally arouses the keenest interest in the minds of the people of Mauritius since the livelihood of the whole population as well as the revenue of Government depends on the prosperity of the sugar industry. His Majesty's Government had already announced in November, 1945, what assistance they were prepared to offer, and it may be conveniently summarised as follows:—

- A bonus of £1,000,000 on the price of the 1945 crop.
- A grant of £5 per acre towards cost of replanting cane lands previously devoted to foodcrops.
- A free grant of £500,000 and an interest free loan of £800,000 to the Mauritius Government to be advanced to sugar growers in order to meet the cost of replanting cane lands previously devoted to foodcrops, the loan to be repayable in 20 years with interest at 3 per cent.

This generous offer was accepted with gratitude mixed with some misgiving that so considerable a part of the assistance, £800,000, was in the form of a loan and not a free gift. The case of the sugar industry was ably and patiently presented to His Majesty's Government by Sir Philippe Raffray, the representative of the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture. The case, in brief, was

that the rehabilitation of the industry after the catastrophic cyclone of 1945 and the loss and damage caused by the switching over of one-fifth of the sugar land to the growing of food crops required a free gift from His Majesty's Government of the order of Rs 35,000,000 (or £2,625,000) and that the indebtedness of the industry was already so great that to take any part of that sum in the form of a loan would be merely adding weight to the existing millstone of debt and ensuring the eventual ruin of the industry. The Chamber of Agriculture felt themselves justified in making these demands on His Majesty's Government because they contended that for a considerable number of years they had not received an adequate price for their sugar and that the British taxpayer had benefited from the low price of sugar. They had *ipso facto* been precluded from reducing the burden of their debts and from accumulating funds to rehabilitate the industry when the war was over.

In the event, His Majesty's Government were unable to accept this point of view. They had their own crushing burdens aggravated by the sudden and unexpected collapse of Japan and the cessation of lease-lend operations. Responsible opinion in Mauritius appreciated the difficulties of His Majesty's Government and, although disappointed, felt themselves bound to accept the generous offer.

Towards the end of 1946, the perennial question of the price to be paid for the sugar of the current crop was raised by His Majesty's Government in the form of an offer made to the Chamber of Agriculture. Negotiations had not been concluded at the end of the year.

Another important event affecting the sugar industry has been the setting up of a cyclone and drought insurance fund. A proposal to insure the sugar crop against cyclones was first made in 1906 and since that time the question has been considered on and off. The difficulty has been to arrive at a method of computing cyclonic damage which would be acceptable to insurer and insured. A solution to this problem has at last been found and on the 1st October, 1946, an ordinance to provide for the compulsory insurance of the sugar cane crops of the Colony against cyclones and droughts was passed by the Council of Government.

Under this ordinance insurance is compulsory and damage by drought or cyclone is assessed by comparing the production of sugar during a cyclone or drought year with the average production during the three immediately preceding normal years.

#### PROPOSALS FOR A NEW CONSTITUTION

The second topic of interest on which the Governor reported progress to the Council of Government on his return was the question of the new constitution. During the months of March and April, 1945, a convention, named the Consultative Committee on the Constitution, and consisting of all the elected members of

The Council of Government and fourteen representative persons, had met frequently under the chairmanship of the Governor to exchange ideas and to make suggestions for a new constitution for Mauritius. The existing constitution had come into force in 1885. A sufficient measure of agreement regarding the main features of a new constitution was reached to allow the Governor to work out his own ideas, which he did during his journey to London. The existing Council of Government consists of the Governor, as President, ten elected members, eight ex-officio members, three nominated officials and six nominated unofficials. There is thus an unofficial majority of four although in practice, owing mainly to casualties among the elected members, the officials usually have a majority. The franchise is an extremely limited one and two of the constituencies are in effect "rotten boroughs." The new proposals involve an increase of the elected members from ten to nineteen and an increase of the nominated unofficials from six to twelve, leaving only eight official members of whom three are ex-officio. A lowering and broadening of the franchise has been suggested and in accordance therewith the new electorate would be very much larger than the existing one. In short, the new proposals are for a representative legislature—a considerable advance on the existing constitution but not yet responsible government. The draft summary of Proposed Constitution Arrangements was received on the 9th September and was referred for discussion to the Consultative Committee on the 6th November, 1946. They have been debated at length and the discussions were directed towards precise conclusions based on the actual facts and needs of the Colony and also towards solution of the real constitutional problem, namely, the political integration of a plural society. There are wide differences between the various communities in respect of numbers, wealth, education and political experience. The problem is how to secure a balanced representation of these interests in a constitution in which the unofficial element will largely preponderate over the official and in which the official executive will be irremovable. The discussions were still continuing at the end of 1946. The principal difference of opinion in the Committee was whether or not the constitution should provide for universal male suffrage. The other differences of opinion were as to whether women should be given the vote and as to whether a qualified voter should be allowed to vote in two constituencies. It is not proposed to reproduce here the arguments for and against these points.

#### DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE

The third subject on which the Governor reported to the Council of Government on his return from England was that of development and welfare. He reported the progress that he had been able to make in discussions with the Secretary of State's

advisers, the lines along which he wished policy to run, and the objectives at which he was aiming. The next part of this report contains a statement on the progress during the year of the more important local projects for development and welfare. At this stage it is only necessary to deal with the broad outlines of policy.

The economy of the Island is based almost wholly on the growing and manufacture of sugar. The staple foodstuffs of the population are largely imported. 80 per cent of the sugar crop is produced by large planters who number a little more than 200. 20 per cent is produced by 14,560 small planters, i.e. who produce up to 1,000 tons of cane a year. The great mass of Indo-Mauritian labourers, who perform the agricultural operations of sugar production, are wage-earners with little interest in the cultivation of land on their own account.

To complete this picture it must be remembered that practically none of the coloured population are engaged in agriculture. They are professional men, black coated workers, mechanics and labourers concentrated for the most part in the urban areas. Before the war this section of the community suffered severely from unemployment. The situation at present is still masked by the fact that over 10,000 men are required to work as pioneers in the Middle East.

There is a good deal of land in the Colony not under any form of cultivation. It is not known whether it is suitable for cultivation and the assumption is common that it is not. One of the main problems of Mauritius is how to bring back into fruitful contact with the soil some part at least of the people who have become divorced therefrom. This problem will be attacked from several directions. In the first place, it must be finally determined by surveys whether or not large parts of the uncultivated land can be cultivated, or to use the words of the Governor, whether the land which now only supports deer and pig cannot be made to support men and women. It is already evident that the cultivation of tea could be largely extended. It remains to be seen whether other foodstuffs cannot be produced, in particular, dairy products, meat, poultry and eggs, on the basis of a system of peasant agriculture. For this purpose a Land Settlement Officer will be required. It is satisfactory to be able to report that one has already been appointed, but he had not reached the Island by the end of 1946. It will be necessary to extend the area of cultivated land by irrigation and this step has already been provided for in the Ten-Year Development Plan.

Both the extension of the existing Co-operative-Credit Societies and the application of co-operation to consumers' societies are envisaged. To these ends approval has been sought for the appointment of an officer to devote himself wholly to this task, which is at present one of the many functions of the Director of Agriculture. There are many other ways in which the agricultural economy

f the Island will be developed and diversified, but the details hereof will be given in the next part of the report.

The plans of the Governor for diversifying the monocrop economy of the Island also include the development of other industries, such as the tea industry and the aloe fibre industry together with the sack factory.

The health of the people of Mauritius and sanitary conditions on the Island, including the state of the hospitals, leave much to be desired. These are facts known to everyone and clearly set forth by the Director of the Medical and Health Department in his report on Health Conditions in Mauritius dated March, 1944, which includes proposals for ameliorating and finally curing the situation. Every visitor arriving in Mauritius by the gate-way of its capital, Port Louis, is struck by the dilapidated and insanitary conditions of the city. Every doctor from overseas is gravely concerned at the state of health of the bulk of the population. And so, of course, is this Administration. But the immediate difficulty is to get the money and the men to put the situation right. The money difficulty will be overcome but the problem of getting the men remains, although it is encouraging to be able to record that in the year 1946 the Department of Health was reinforced by a distinguished orthopaedic surgeon to look after the victims of infantile paralysis. A dentist also arrived and the teeth of school children are now receiving attention.

The most important and outstanding fact to record in connection with welfare and development during the year 1946 is that the Governor finally elaborated his far-reaching and complex plan for the development and welfare of the Colony and gave them concrete form in the shape of a development and welfare budget covering a period of ten years and separate from the ordinary annual budget of the Colony.

The following quotation from a memorandum by the author of the Development and Welfare Ten-Year Plan, is of interest: "The primary object of the separation of the development budget from the ordinary budget is to ensure that a programme of development can be entered upon with some assurance that it will be carried out irrespective of fluctuations in the Colony's revenue, fluctuations which are pronounced in countries dependent mainly on the production of primary products. The establishment of a Mauritius Development and Welfare Fund, to which will be carried monies earmarked for development and from which expenditure on approved projects will be periodically voted by the legislature, with no automatic lapse at the end of a financial year, should enable a comprehensive programme to be planned and executed and should assist the Colony to break away from a policy, sporadic in its application and largely ineffective in its results, of promoting development schemes only in prosperous years and slowing down or abandoning them in years of adversity." The total amount of money

expected to be available during the ten year period, 1946-56, is little more than Rs 100,000,000. Of this total it is proposed to raise a half by means of a loan floated in London, whilst the other half will come from imperial and local sources in roughly equal parts.

The plan as a whole, has been approved in principle by the Council of Government (certain portions have been approved in detail) and is now under consideration by the Secretary of State.

It is satisfactory to be able to record that the Secretary of State's approval has been given, during the writing of this report for certain items of the development and welfare budget so that there is at least no financial obstacle to a start being made on :

- (1) The Training College
- (2) Government Housing
- (3) Medical Buildings
- (4) Nutrition
- (5) Schemes for Irrigation and Domestic Water Supplies
- (6) Roads
- (7) Sewerage.

In general the most formidable difficulty which a policy of Development and Welfare has to overcome is that of getting anything done in a plural society. The political conditions which tend to stagnation are aggravated by an insidious climate and the tropical apathy of a large part of the population. It would be too much to hope that the difficulty will diminish as the development and welfare plans work out and finally disappear with the disappearance of malaria and all the other evils, whose elimination is now being planned. This difficulty will remain. It will even tend to delay and to obstruct the Ten Year Plan every time an opportunity presents itself in connection with the voting of funds. The danger may be even greater when the elected and unofficial members of a new Legislative Council are increased and the officials reduced in number. This risk must, of course, be accepted and may even be counterbalanced by the force of public opinion expressed through a larger electorate.

There are other difficulties of a non-political order which it is hoped to overcome by means of the development and welfare budget. The first is finance, which in this case means not merely the provision of money but the provision of money in such a way that a well thought out plan can be pursued uninterruptedly over a period of years and not held up or abandoned for lack of funds during a period of financial stringency. This arrangement will impose a heavy responsibility on the new Legislative Council when it comes into existence. In the meantime, the existing Council of Government, after a life of over ten years when members were no longer confident of their mandate and in spite of opposition within their ranks, courageously voted the development and welfare budget and by resolution constituted the Fund.

There are difficulties, other than financial, which still have to be overcome; but fortunately it has been possible in some cases to obtain expert advice. The Government of Mauritius had such advice in 1946 on the further development of the tea industry and in methods of composting; in 1945, on the methods of attacking the poliomyelitis epidemic, on local government, on co-operation, in the salaries and organisation of the civil service, and on housing for labourers on estates. It will shortly have expert advice on town and country planning and on sewerage schemes. But when the experts have left local trained personnel are necessary to carry on the job.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTIVITY

*Tea.* The visit of Captain E. de Mowbray seems likely to have far-reaching consequences. He reported that the soil and climate of Mauritius are ideally suited for tea-growing and that some 50,000 additional acres could be put under cultivation. The local market is under-exploited, annual consumption being at present about 1½ lbs. per head. If, however, the export market is to be aimed at a considerable raising of the quality of much of the locally produced tea will be necessary and, in addition, labour costs will have to be reduced. The de Mowbray report had not been accepted by Government by the end of the year. It can, however, be said that the prospect made apparent by Captain de Mowbray of a potential new major industry is not likely to be ignored at a time when labour surpluses can be foreseen as a result of increased mechanisation on sugar estates.

*Cordia Macrostachya.* The productivity of the Island was indirectly furthered by a visit by Mr. Wiehe of the Department of Agriculture to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad. Mr. Wiehe also visited the United Kingdom and the United States of America and returned with information about weed control, new varieties of sugarcane, and additional methods of sugar cultivation. His visit to Trinidad was, however, mainly in connection with the control of a plant pest called *cordia macrostachya*.

This plant is a native of British Guiana and seed is thought to have been introduced into Mauritius among a consignment of cane in 1890. The seed was sown in the Pamplemousses Gardens where it spent some years before two circumstances brought its insidious and destructive character to light. The first was the introduction from Madagascar of the bulbul or *oiseau conde*. This bird is the best agent that could be devised for disseminating seed of *cordia macrostachya* which hence came to be called *herbe conde*. The second circumstance was the accidental introduction of a sugarcane root grub (*clemora smithi arrow*). It was thought that a parasite of this grub would be encouraged to do its duty if it were rewarded with artificially established rows of *herbe conde* alongside cane fields, since it was known that the sweet secretion of the vesicular hairs of *herbe conde* was attractive to *tiphia parallela*,

the name of this particular parasite. This human interference was all that *herbe conde* required : well-intentioned man having made an orderly distribution of the plant among sugar estates, the bulbul was ready to take over responsibility for chaotic distribution. *Cordia* rapidly spread. It competed favourably with other plant species, displacing them from the position they occupied in the Island's secondary vegetation. Pastures were abandoned, aloe-fibre plantations were invaded, and it became a pest in cane fields.

In Trinidad Mr. Wiehe was concerned with the biological control of *cordia*. By the time he left, the problem had been narrowed to indicate the more profitable limits of research to be carried out by the Imperial Parasite Bureau. Since then, some parasites have been prepared in Trinidad for despatch to Mauritius. Elaborate arrangements have to be made for their airborne journey which must not take in all more than ten days and during which time they require to be kept at a constant temperature.

*Composting.* Research was undertaken to discover the practicability of turning to economic agricultural use some of the waste matter of the townships. Mr. Van Vuren, an agricultural officer from South Africa, spent a fortnight in Mauritius during which time he demonstrated two methods of composting. He at once appreciated that local prejudices were too strong to permit of night soil being incorporated in compost, although this valuable natural manure is available owing to the inadequacy of the drainage system in most of the island. He demonstrated however that good compost can be made of refuse from slaughterhouses and vegetable matter. A compost bed started in Curepipe under Mr. Van Vuren's directions achieved a temperature of 150°—160°F. after three days, despite an unexpectedly heavy rainfall during that time.

*Milk Supply.* A campaign for increasing and improving the Island's milk supply—a campaign which will be a major development project in the next few years—saw its humble beginning in the creation within the agricultural department of a nucleus dairy-branch. The first appointments to have been made are of propaganda agents to instruct and advise Indo-Mauritian cow-keepers.

*Fisheries.* Only preliminaries to the development of the fishing industry were achieved during the year. Dr. Wheeler, Marine Biologist, returned to the United Kingdom to supervise the building and equipping of a research vessel which will come to the Indian Ocean during 1947 to facilitate the scientific development of a sound industry.

*Irrigation.* The far-reaching plans for irrigation included in the Ten-Year Plan were crystallised in 1946. Apart from surveys, work was carried out on the Mare Longue reservoir which was begun in 1945 as an emergency undertaking to reabsorb ex-servicemen into civil life. This reservoir when completed will augment the supply of water to the hydro-electric station at Tamarin and will

bring irrigation to parts of Black River district. In the north, repairs to the lining of the Midlands-La Nicolière feeder canal were continued.

#### IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING CONDITIONS

**Nutrition.** A whole-time Nutrition Officer arrived in Mauritius in October, 1946. Earlier research work in this field had left many gaps unexplored. Miss Chettle, the newly appointed officer who was trained under Dr. Platt at the Human Nutrition Research Unit, immediately undertook an enquiry to discover the deficiencies of the present diet.

**Anti-Malaria Measures.** The greatest progress made in the campaign against malaria was in the sphere of research. Field-works were continued in order not to waste expenditure already made on their beginnings, but the results of research in 1946 give grounds for supposing that extensive field works may become an outmoded method of prosecuting the campaign.

For the first D.D.T. experiment it was necessary to choose a locality in which malaria was hyperendemic, and which was sufficiently isolated to permit conclusive results to be achieved with a limited quantity of D.D.T. A site was found to satisfy both conditions. This was a settlement near the coast in the Black River district. The findings were interesting : in twenty rooms sprayed with D.D.T. only seventeen mosquitoes were caught during three months compared with one thousand and eighty-four caught in twenty similar unsprayed rooms. This suggests that the materials with which the interiors of the huts of the poorer classes are constructed, namely, dried cow dung and earth plaster with a thatch of dried sugar cane leaves, are capable of retaining an effective residual spray. These results encouraged the Senior Pathologist to elaborate a scheme for applying D.D.T. to all dwellings, both animal and human, in a relatively isolated block of country containing about 3,000 inhabitants and numerous breeding places which render the area unsuitable for anti-larval measures. Information derived from this experiment will, it is hoped, indicate the period which will prove best for the administration of paludrine to the human malarial reservoirs.

**Orthopaedics.** The tragic epidemic of anterior poliomyelitis which broke out in 1945 will have brought some good in its wake. The hospital at Floreal, opened to meet the emergency, has seen the beginnings of an orthopaedic organisation which will be incorporated permanently in the Medical and Health Department. During 1946, Mr. Fitton, F.R.C.S., and two English physiotherapists arrived. The presence of an orthopaedic surgeon in the Island has already been of benefit to many members of the community apart from the patients at Floreal. Money was voted in the 1946-47 estimates for the establishment of an orthopaedic unit which will be built in 1947. In the meantime, during 1946,

Mr. Fitton carried out orthopaedic works at all the hospitals, plans were laid for the training in England of Mauritian women as physiotherapists and occupational therapists, and two officers from the prisons were sent to England to learn about the manufacture of orthopaedic instruments.

*Education.* A site near Moka was chosen and purchased for the building of a residential teachers' training college. Meanwhile the existing training college received additions to its staff.

*Domestic Water Supply.* The bulk of the preliminary survey work for the improvements to the domestic water supply envisaged in the Ten-Year Plan was carried out. Apart from surveys an increase in the diameter of pipes in part of Flacq district was undertaken as a work of urgency.

*Roads.* During the year much maintenance was carried out on roads which had fallen into bad disrepair during the war. Work was continued on a new road between Curepipe and Quartier Militaire. This is an enterprise that was begun in 1946 primarily to provide employment for ex-servicemen. When completed the road will reduce the present distance necessarily travelled between Curepipe and Quartier Militaire by fifty per cent.

#### SOCIAL WELFARE

*Village Councils.* 1946 was disappointing to those who hoped to see an increase in the numbers and influence of village councils. At the end of the year, only three councils justified their existence. In the absence of a leader, the villagers of Mauritius do not like co-operating unless there is some clear material benefit in sight. Such benefits as come from hygienic and anti-malarial precautions are not sufficiently obvious to encourage them to join together and assume any responsibility. In the beginning of the year there was a village council at Triolet, a preponderantly Hindoo village in Pamplemousses district. The village council met for periodic talks and listened to the advice of the Government medical officer on sanitation and other topics. The villagers had shown that they could co-operate after the bad cyclone of 1945 when there was much suffering among them. However, during 1946, there was a proposal for a new branch road in the village to be taken over by the public works. There was a clear need for some such road. Resignations meanwhile took place from the Committee of the village council and then petitions started coming in about the exact course to be followed by the new branch road. Counter-petitions were as numerous. As a matter of fact, the dispute only concerned a difference of some 200 yards in the point of junction of the new road with the main road. The heat of the dispute was generated by the interests of those who owned land beside either projected track. Unfortunately the village council—no longer representative—insisted on turning the argument into a trial of its strength. There were plenty of other places with

equally great needs for new branch roads ; so it was decided that unless the inhabitants of Triolet would agree to one track or the other being proclaimed the money would not be spent on Triolet at all. For all practical purposes the village council in Triolet has ceased to exist.

It is clear that a firm foundation for local government can only be built on an organization of which the members appreciate that they have tangible interests in common.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In the year 1946, definite progress has been made in the sphere of local government. The Council of Government voted the necessary funds for the creation of two new posts of Civil Commissioner, one for the North and the other for the South of the Island. The Civil Commissioner (South) has already been appointed and at the end of the year had been at work for some months. At last the Governor has an officer who can see and hear for himself the needs and complaints of the people of his district. This officer represents the Governor's point of view and helps to co-ordinate and mediate in the work of technical departments. A Civil Commissioner for the North has been selected and is on his way from England. It is anticipated that two Civil Commissioners will not be able to cover the Island properly and it will be necessary to appoint at least one more. One of their most important functions will be to encourage and foster the growth of local government in the rural areas in the belief that what people willingly do for themselves is of far greater value and permanence than anything that is done for them by a remote authority. Another most important function of the Civil Commissioners is responsibility for public security. It is sometimes imagined that the police are primarily responsible for public security. The point has been expounded by the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances which occurred in the North of Mauritius in 1943 :—

“ Responsibility for law and order should be in the hands of experienced civil officers, well acquainted with local conditions and personalities, intelligent enough to appreciate the political, economic, religious and social factors in any situation which may arise, and with sufficient prestige to influence the minds of all parties to a dispute. They would provide the listening ear and the observant eye and Police Officers who are actually commanding the Police, should work in close liaison with these civil officers.

“ The preservation of law and order is primarily a question of good administration by the Government as a whole. The people should feel that Government is not merely a matter of police and propaganda, but that all departments, especially the social service departments,

Education, Health, Agriculture and Labour, are working for their welfare. If complaints or grievances arise, they should be promptly attended to by a responsible officer on the spot."

#### CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUM-DRINKING

It has long been evident that one of the major social evils of Mauritius was the prevalence of drunkenness amongst the wage-earning classes. During the war this evil was aggravated by a vastly increased spending power combined with a shortage of food and consumption goods. The result was a striking increase in rum-drinking. Everyone publicly deplored the situation but all the parties interested in this trade tended to prevent any remedial measures being applied.

The policy of Government for the checking of alcoholism is :

- (a) to reduce the quantity of rum produced for consumption ;
- (b) to reduce the number of channels along which it flows to the retailers and eventually to cut out the majority of the middlemen, i.e. the wholesalers and compounders ;
- (c) to reduce the number of distributing centres, i.e. the retailers ; and
- (d) to exercise strict control through a special Police unit and excisemen working under close supervision.

There are many persons interested in the rum trade, so Government was careful to make its policy plain by formal announcement two years ago and since then has employed every form of publicity. The policy was finally made effective on the 1st January, 1947, by legislative and administrative measures which had been devised long before that date. Government does not think that these measures will effect a sudden and complete cure of the disease of alcoholism but is confident that they will alleviate it. Government intends to go on pursuing its policy and to that end a Select Committee is considering what further steps are necessary.

## PART II

### Chapter I: Population

The principal sources from which the population of Mauritius has gradually been constituted in the course of time are :

- (1) the French immigrants ;
- (2) the slave population principally of African origin ;
- (3) the Chinese trader ;
- (4) the Indian immigrant or Indian merchant ;
- (5) the British official, merchant or planter ;  
to which might be added minor influxes from Madagascar and Ceylon.

Thus it is conventional for statistical purposes to divide the whole population into three classes (1) the general population, which comprises Europeans and descendants of Europeans, and people of African and mixed origins ; (2) the Indian population proper, which is made up of Indian immigrants and their unmixed descendants and (3) the Chinese population which consists of immigrants from China and their descendants. Of these three classes, the Indian constitutes the largest percentage, 63, of the total population. This Indian population, however, really consists of two main groups, Hindus and Moslems, in the ratio of about 8.5 to 1. The Chinese are the smallest racial group, constituting only about 2½ per cent of the total population. They are engaged for the most part in trade.

The total population of the island is approximately 428,000, not counting the 18,500 inhabitants of neighbouring islands which are dependencies of Mauritius. The population has been steadily increasing during the last fifteen years at an average rate of 2,000 per annum or by nearly 5 persons per thousand of population. The density of population in different parts of this small island covering barely 720 square miles is extraordinarily variable. In the low-lying western district there are little more than a hundred persons living over a square mile ; but on the central plateau, migration has brought about a concentration of more than 1,500 persons to the square mile. In towns there is considerable overcrowding : in the capital, Port Louis, recent census enumeration has revealed the existence of 27,000 persons over a single square mile ; while in the second largest town, Curepipe, the number of inhabitants per unit area has increased by 40 per cent in the last 18 years. In fact, 37 per cent of the total population at present live in towns.

One noteworthy feature of ethnical significance differentiating the two main classes of the population is to be found in the

sex distribution ; whereas in the general population the proportion of females has always been somewhat larger, in the Indian it is almost exactly the reverse and this feature has been noteworthy for at least the past 25 years. It is not accounted for by the preponderance in birth rate of the one sex ; for although it is true for the Indian, it is not for the general population, in which the male births have always been slightly in excess.

The disproportion between the sexes in Mauritius is of long standing and was due in the beginning to the preponderance of male immigration. This disproportion has been gradually readjusting itself by a natural process in the course of the past hundred of more years, though the effect may still persist to a certain degree in the Indian class of the population. There are, however, definite indications from the results of the census of 1944 that after the age of 50 the survival of the female in the general population is greater than that of the male. In the Indian population it is after the age of 60 that the survival of the female is remarkably greater than that of the male.

The birth rates in the general population have decreased very sensibly in the past ten years from an average of about 36 per thousand in 1936-1938, to about 32 per thousand in 1945 and 33.5 per thousand in 1946 ; but the birth rate has recently increased very remarkably in the Indian population : in 1943 it was 33 per thousand ; in 1944 it rose to 50.6 per thousand (the highest level on record) and in 1945 and 1946 it remained at about 42 per thousand.

Death rate, which was at a previous ten-year average level of 28.3 per thousand for the whole population, increased to 36.1 per thousand in 1945, the year of two severe cyclones. The previous records show 25.9 per thousand in 1943 and 27.1 per thousand in 1944. In 1946 it was 29.5 per thousand. Death rate as a rule is markedly higher in the Indian population, but there again the mortality in the community is very appreciably higher among the males than among the females, to the extent of 10 per cent and occasionally 15 per cent. Infantile mortality is comparatively high in Mauritius. It oscillates around 150 per thousand live births, but in 1945 it reached the very high figure of 188 per thousand. The rate for 1942 was 141.6 per thousand and for 1943, 141.0 per thousand. In 1946, it was 145.4 per thousand.

The census of 1944 revealed that about 35 per cent of the marriageable persons of both sexes in the general population were married according to religious rites or by civil contract. In the Indian population the corresponding percentage is 50 per cent.

The number of workers excluding intellectuals and professional workers is, in round figures, 135,000, of which 52 per cent are agricultural workers.

As regards the educational status of the population, over 48,000 pupils, or 50 per cent of the population between 5 and 21 years of age, were on the roll of public and private schools in 1946. The

number of children attending secondary schools amounts to 5,000. 5 per cent of the general population of both sexes can both read and write. Among the Indian population, the corresponding percentages were 21 for males and about 6 for females.

Religious creeds in Mauritius correspond roughly with the classes adopted for dividing up the population. Nearly 98 per cent of the general population are Christians of the Church of Rome, or of the Church of England. 77 per cent of the Indian class are Hindus, 22 per cent are Mohamedans; the remainder are Christianized Indians. The Chinese are almost exclusively Buddhists.

## Chapter II: Occupations, Wages and Labour Organisation

### *Historical Background*

Before the Suez Canal was dug, Mauritius, small though it was, had its strategic importance in the traffic lane between South Africa, India and the East. When it was abandoned by the Dutch at the beginning of the eighteenth century, it became so much of a nuisance as a haunt of pirates that it had to be re-occupied by the French. The colonists could hardly expect to be revictualled from France, so they set themselves to grow their own food and to experiment with other products for export. After various trials had been made over many years, it was found that sugar canes were on the whole the most profitable crop, and the planting of the canes and the manufacture into raw sugar has remained to this day the principal occupation of the Island of Mauritius. If, however, Mauritius had not been situated in a traffic lane, or had not had suitable anchorages, it is unlikely that costly experiments would have been undertaken in order to find a suitable crop, and even now that one crop has been found, there is no insuperable reason why the world should always buy sugar from Mauritius if it can obtain it elsewhere at a cheaper price. Any gull-haunted uninhabited island, however remote, is more certain of being able to export its guano, whatever crops are being raised elsewhere, than Mauritius is of exporting its sugar if the cost of production mounts excessively or even if its principal customers decide to grow their own beet or cane.

### *Geographical Situation*

Mauritius is a peak breaking above the surface of the sea at one end of a subterranean range of mountains. The Dependencies of Mauritius are smaller peaks of the same range. The largest, at several hundred miles' distance, has a few hundred inhabitants

who lead a pastoral life, varied by fishing. Some of the ambitious young men come to Mauritius to better themselves, but it must be presumed that the majority stay there because they like it. On still smaller islands men come to work for six months at a time in order to gather copra and guano, and to fish the slopes of the under-sea mountains.

### *Sugar-Cane Field Labour*

The majority of all the workers in Mauritius, men, women and children, are employed in the cane-fields. The number actually employed varies from day to day according to the work to be done but about 50,000 are required daily during the first six months of the year and 70,000 or 80,000 during the crop season, which lasts about a hundred days during the second half of the year. No child under the age of twelve can be hired for work in the fields, but a mother sometimes brings her young children with her as she does not wish to leave them alone at home. The work to be performed varies considerably; it may be weeding, or clearing trash or putting fertiliser round the roots of the cane. The men may have to cut or transport canes in the harvest season, dig holes or pile up stones. The work may be paid by the piece or according to the task or, more rarely, according to time taken. The best workers and also the majority of workers are paid on a daily basis, so that they are free to change employers whenever a better price is offered elsewhere. About 10,000 workers are employed by the month and they usually live on the estate premises in houses provided by the estate. Some day-workers live on the estates too, but most of them live in the villages or townships. As many as three thousand daily are transported by lorry from the townships to the estates. An efficient worker living on an estate and so obtaining free housing and medical care earns on an average about Rs 45 per month in cash throughout the year, but many earn considerably more than that in extras during the crop season. The estate may also advance him money for the purchase of a cow (the manure is useful to the estate) and the cow can be fed and stabled on the estate; this means Rs 25 a month extra income. The worker can also keep goats and chickens; he obtains free firewood, and if his house is near the sea he can fish. In a hot climate it is best to begin heavy work very early in the morning, so that often the day's work is over before midday.

The balance of the day can be spent as the worker chooses. A man, a woman and two children would for Rs 50 a month be able on an Indian diet to exist with very few comforts and no luxuries. The wife, as a rule, and the children over twelve years old are accustomed to work for hire for several days of the week, and the woman then earns about two thirds of her husband's earnings. The minimum wage for children under fourteen is 40 cents a day. There

re different statutory minimum wages for the different categories of estate workers. These rates were last fixed in July, 1946, after Minimum Wage Advisory Board, composed of trade unionists, state managers and Labour Department officers, had made recommendations to the Governor in Executive Council. On a time basis the day is 8 hours long, but on a task or piece-work basis it may be only 5 hours. Absenteeism is common on Saturdays and Mondays, so that a labourer commonly works less than 30 hours a week.

### *Sugar Factory Labour*

Besides field labourers, several thousand workers are employed in the thirty odd sugar factories, either during the crop season only or throughout the year. Those employed in the crop season are in charge of machines and are paid practically the same rates as field workers, but those who work throughout the year are skilled workers who can undertake to repair and overhaul the machines. The latter are paid much higher rates than the field labourers and their well organised union signed on agreement with the employers in 1946 to settle their wages till further notice. Wages vary from Rs 60 per month to Rs 100 and upwards. No child under the age of 15 may work in a factory, so at this age a boy begins to learn the trade by the side of his father or uncle. It is difficult for anyone who has no relative in the trade to obtain the necessary skill. In order to reduce costs, some factories have been closed and the better equipped factories have worked longer hours. This has meant a reduction in employment for factory workers. After 8 hours work, overtime is paid time and a third or time and a half.

### *Government Labour*

After the sugar industry, the Government is the next largest employer with nearly 10,000 employees, excluding those engaged in special war services. These employees include members of the Railway Department, the Police and the Public Works, and salaries vary considerably. A cost of living bonus has been allowed since the war, and the lowest paid workers have had an increase of about 188 per cent. Part of the rise in the cost of living is due to a scarcity of imported goods and no rise in wages will reduce the scarcity. It is contended by some that the number of Government employees is out of proportion to the size of the population and that it would be better to have fewer employees, higher paid and more efficient. This ideal would be easier to realise if there were outside employment competing with Government in efficiency and security. The outside employer complains that except in respect of manual labourers, who are affected by the wage standards of the sugar industry, it is the Government employee that sets the example for other workers and therefore rises in wage may embarrass the private employer but do not necessarily increase the efficiency of the Government worker. A clerk begins work at Rs 75 per month,

should rise steadily to Rs 300 per month or more, and works a six-hour day.

### *Tea and Other Labour*

The tea industry and the aloe fibre industry, which it is hoped may supplement—without competing with—the sugar industry, employ each about a thousand workers who enjoy much the same conditions as in the sugar industry. The few hundred artisans employed in the ship yards and engineering workshops are closely affected by the hours of work and rates of wages paid in the sugar factories. Dock-workers and stevedores earn higher wages than other semi-skilled manual workers, but this is in part a compensation for the irregular nature of their work. Three or four rupees a day is not uncommon. Men employed in bakeries are also paid at a comparatively high rate. They work at night and are usually paid on a daily basis, since they absent themselves at least once a week to have a good night's rest. Shop clerks number several thousand; there are 3,000 shops. Their hours of work are limited in the case of adults, to 54 per week, though the shop may stay open for longer hours. All shops must, however, close on Sunday afternoon and one other afternoon in the week. Salaries vary between Rs 50 and Rs 100 per month.

### *Cost of Living for Visitors*

For a government officer whose home is in England the cost of living in Mauritius is somewhat high. House rent tends to rise if the lease is short and the houses are in no way intended to be labour-saving. It is therefore necessary to employ a staff of servants who no doubt do their best but not always in the interest of their employer. Cheap transport is only available during certain hours of the day, so that those who are sociable find that a private motor car is almost essential. Many of the articles for sale in the shops and elsewhere have no fixed price and it is fairly certain that the local inhabitants can buy at a cheaper rate than the foreigner. Many of the goods are imported, and the cost of transport and customs duty has to be added to the original price. Intestinal illness is common and drugs and doctors are no cheaper than in England. An English government officer with a wife and a child would have to choose a small house and lead a very quiet life if he wished to live within an income of Rs 500 per month.

### *Labour Welfare Organisation*

The worker, if he does not wish to deal directly with his employer can approach him through three other channels, the Labour Department, the trade union organisation and the Industrial Court. The Industrial Court is a magistrate's court which specialises in labour cases and which dispenses justice with the

minimum of formality. The magistrate happens at present to be Indo-Mauritian, so the Indo-Mauritian workers, who form the majority of employees, are assured of an understanding listener; a court is also required to travel in every corner of the Island, although it is, and to advertise well in advance the days and times of its sittings. Many workers and not a few employers seek the advice of the magistrate, but suits are seldom actually taken to court as in most cases a satisfactory settlement is reached in chambers. There are five Labour Inspectors in the field and a worker or employer can always appeal for their assistance in case of a dispute, if the inspectors are also required to ensure that the labour laws are being observed and are fully entitled to take action on their own initiative, whether a complaint has been lodged or not. The Labour Commissioner can intervene in collective disputes and require the parties to submit the dispute to conciliation or arbitration. He can also recommend to the Governor that a Minimum Wage Advisory Board be appointed if the circumstances seem to warrant.

During a brief period of 1946 there were three assistant commissioners working in the office, but for most of the year there were only one or two.

Those engaged in industry (including the sugar industry) in Mauritius tend to divide not only functionally but also socially and racially, and officers who are not Mauritians are assumed to stand above the immediate racial conflict, whereas the motives of Mauritians are examined by their fellows with the utmost suspicion. Mauritius, however, also hears the echoes of conflicts in the world outside, and even officers who are not Mauritians must enforce come from one hemisphere or the other. This again renders them the object of grave suspicion which it is not difficult for interested parties to work up to a fever-pitch of non-co-operation. England itself may, according to the mood of the speaker, be either kindly mother or a greedy tyrant, the fountain of liberal ideas or the source of all reaction, the centre of justice or the centre of injustice, the home of democracy or the hive of fascism; very frequently it would seem, she is all these things at once.

#### *Trade Unionism*

Occupying an office in the Labour Department but not attached to it is the Trade Union Adviser to the Governor. The Adviser has held high office in an English trade union and has a wide knowledge of trade union methods. His advice is useful not only to Government in its relations with local trade unions, but also to the trade union organisers themselves when they wish to know what experience has taught the trade unions in England. There are sixteen *bona fide* trade unions (officially registered as Industrial Associations), of which the majority are trade unions of employees and are affiliated to a Trade Union Council set up on the advice of the Trade Union Adviser. Government employees are represented

by two well organised unions numbering several thousand members. Branches are set up in most departments and permanent machinery of contact is being tried. Outside Government departments, the Engineering and Technical Workers' Union, which numbers approximately 4,000 members and includes most of the sugar factory employees, comes nearest to orthodox trade-union practice. Even so, there are moments when its officials seem to forget they are appointed to act within the rules of its constitution, and behave in the most arbitrary manner. This is partly due to the apathy of the ordinary member, but it can easily lead to the control of the union by a determined minority in opposition to the real desires of the majority. Mauritian workers are very individualistic and do not co-operate easily or for long.

Socially and racially the Technical Workers' Union is almost a solid bloc, but the agricultural workers, though broadly speaking they are one race, have racial connections with the small planters with the commercial section and with many of the professional middle class. Sometimes they regard themselves as Indo-Mauritians, sometimes as workers, and sometimes as individuals struggling to mount the social ladder. In each case their allies, their advantages and their weaknesses appear to be different, and in consequence the most united of the unions of agricultural workers is led by a president who emphasizes their religious homogeneity rather than their class solidarity. The membership of this union varies very considerably from a few hundreds to several thousands, according to the popularity of the matter in dispute. Other unions include waterside workers, general workers, shop clerks, senior staff of sugar estates, municipal employees, building workers, and sack factory workers, and all depend on their leaders, who are usually their founders, for the effectiveness of their action. When it is remembered that Mauritius is far from being fully industrialised, and that the majority of its inhabitants are not accustomed to democratic institutions, it will be realised that trade unionists in Mauritius have to learn by practice, and that if the unions were perfect models of English usage it would only prove they were not run by Mauritians.

### *Labour Legislation*

Laws for the registration of factories and for the registration of apprentices were passed during 1946. Since no factory can operate without being registered, the aim of the law is first to make certain of information as to the whereabouts of all factories and, secondly, to ensure that all factories are reasonably sanitary and safe. The larger factories are, of course, all well known, but some enterprising small capitalist might at any moment with the aid of such means as wind, or water power, or a little electricity, or an old motor car engine start a workshop with any such avail-

ble labour as that of unoccupied housewives, or children alleging themselves to be over fifteen, or elderly workers in search of a few pence for their tobacco. It never occurs to the manager that anyone except a rival manufacturer is interested in his doings, and it doubt even now the manufacturer and his employers will regard the new law as another device of Government for extracting a rupee or two from the public. The apprenticeship law requires all apprentices in designated trades to register a copy of their indenture with the Labour Department. Boards composed of employers and employees in each designated trade are authorized to draw up the terms which each indenture shall contain. No minor may be employed in a designated trade except as an apprentice. Organisation of apprenticeship under this law has begun with the engineering workshops, but not a few masters, men and apprentices will undoubtedly seek in their own interests to evade regulations which in a public capacity they may well have both approved and assisted in enacting.

The law regarding conciliation and arbitration required that a dispute should have been referred to a conciliation board for ten days before a strike or lockout became legal. The Trade Union Adviser, however, arranged several successful joint committees between unions and employers, and when a joint committee had failed to reach agreement, it seemed futile to begin discussions again at a conciliation board. Yet this was legally necessary before direct action could be taken or before the dispute could be referred to official arbitration. The law has therefore been amended so that a dispute may be referred to arbitration or so that a strike or lockout may take place even though no conciliation board has sat, provided the dispute has been under consideration by the joint committee concerned for at least ten days. Further, it is stipulated that if a party to a dispute applies for a conciliation board and the Labour Commissioner fails to appoint a board on the grounds that the applicants are not sufficiently representative or that no general dispute exists, the applicants are then entitled to declare a strike or lockout, as the case may be, in support of their demands. This amendment diminishes the possibility that the Labour Commissioner might, by dismissing a dispute as frivolous, prevent a genuine grievance from being brought to light. Both sides are accustomed to the machinery of conciliation, which has become statutory since 1938, and it works well enough, provided it is not expected to bear too heavy a responsibility in the case of the loosely organised unions. It is a criminal offence to fail to observe the decision of a conciliation board. The Governor in Executive Council has also the power, in case of expediency, to refer an unsettled dispute to compulsory arbitration.

The Governor gave an undertaking that during his governorship the official arbitrator in an industrial dispute should always, if possible, be a judge of the Supreme Court, and during 1946 rules

were drafted for the proceedings in a court of arbitration. Seven disputes have been referred to arbitration, but only one to official arbitration, and in the cases of unofficial arbitration the arbitrator has not always been a lawyer. The fact is that experiments are being made to find out the kind of industrial arbitration that is best suited to Mauritius. In every case the decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators has been fully respected.

About 30,000 women are employed in the cane fields. They are employed for the most part on a daily basis and absent themselves whenever they are required at home. Their work is lighter than that of the men, though they may do the same work in less quantity. Loading and cane cutting, both highly paid tasks, are rarely performed by women. Women do not enter the sugar-cane factories, so they are not required to work late as the men are during the cane-crushing period. The law forbids women to work at night in industrial undertakings, but the local manufacture of sugar sacks was considered to be a war-emergency which justified an exception being made. The sack factory is a quasi-government concern so there was no doubt about the urgent necessity of running the night shift. This night-shift work has now ceased and if it is resumed will be undertaken by men.

In 1946, by unanimous agreement amongst the parties concerned, the responsibility for making recommendations regarding the minimum wage for sugar-estate labourers was taken out of the hands of the Labour Advisory Board and placed in the hands of a committee composed entirely of the parties concerned. The committee, although its proceedings were marked by a spirit of conciliation and reason, did not arrive at a unanimous recommendation and the Governor in Executive Council had to make the final decision. This was based on the increase in the cost of living and happened to be a compromise between the extremes. The final notice is a printed document five and a half pages long covering all the different kinds of task and skill. The minimum wage of the different categories of labourer paid by the month is usually also the standard wage, exclusive of extra earnings, but the minimum wage of the day labourer is usually exceeded during the greater part of the year. The labourer has often a shrewd idea of what can be paid for the different kinds of work; he may himself be a cane grower, and he almost certainly has a relative who is one; therefore he can calculate against the price of the cane the approximate outlay that can be made in growing it. Unless this price is offered, he holds off, in the meantime either working on some other estate or in his own garden, or even on the same estate at another kind of work, until the price offered is to his liking. There is good understanding between labourers in this matter, and the news of a better price offer is quickly circulated. Such a system would be wasteful in a factory, but in agriculture, partici-

urly single-crop agriculture, it is difficult to say in advance exactly how much labour will be required, when it will be required and where it will be required. Most estates have a small permanent labour force, but few could afford to keep a permanent labour force equal to all the demands that might be made on it. Therefore this casual system has evolved and it must be admitted that in the whole the casual workers are better workers and more prosperous than those employed by the month. Statutory minimum wages for shop clerks, bakers and printers, as recommended by the Labour Advisory Board, are already in existence, and important wage agreements have been reached between the waterside workers and the employers, the skilled workers in sugar factories and their employers, and ship yard workers and their employers. An annually appointed Labour Advisory Board, composed of representatives of employers and employees, both male and female, and of officers of the Labour Department, advises the Governor on any labour question he refers to it.

The regulations under the Factory Ordinance follow English practice and there is a technically qualified Factory Inspector to enforce them. There are scarcely fifty undertakings that would be dignified with the name of factory in Europe and over thirty of them are sugar factories. There is also a match factory, a soap factory, a British-American Tobacco factory, a sack factory, several jute-fibre factories and three tea factories.

### *Social Welfare*

The Workmen's Compensation Ordinance dates from 1931; and a worker injured in an industrial accident is entitled to half pay in case of total temporary incapacity. Permanent incapacity is awarded a proportionate lump sum. Cases of compensation are not infrequent and are usually due to an unlucky accident for which no one can be blamed. The question of abolishing lump-sum payments in favour of pensions is under consideration. The Minimum Wage Order for sugar-estate workers provides for half pay during sickness for labourers employed by the month, but monthly employed labourers are hardly twenty per cent of the total labour force of the sugar industry. Otherwise the sick and the old who have reached the end of their resources have to apply to the Poor Law which expends nearly a million rupees annually. The real insurance is done by the family which in most cases has not yet been reduced to the diminutive size it has reached in England. The Indo-Mauritian is past the stage when property belongs to the family and not to the individual, but there is a strong sense of family solidarity. To the same degree that this sense of family solidarity is strong the sense of community responsibility is weak. Pensions by right for all the sick and the aged would mean transferring the burden from the extended family to the community before the allegiance of the individual has in most cases been

similarly transferred. The extended family would probably try to shift to the state more of its burden than it is entitled to do and the state's officials would have great difficulty in detecting the excess.

### *Ex-Servicemen*

In conclusion the organisation set up in 1945 to deal with the reabsorption of men and women discharged from the army has worked smoothly and well. The Ex-servicemen's Committee, composed for the most part of public-spirited persons who have lent their help voluntarily, has done much to assist ex-Servicemen to fit themselves for the posts they desired. Over 10,000 Mauritians were recruited and by the end of 1946 practically all had been discharged and had been provided for in some way or other. The organisation still remains in being, ready to assist where it can be useful.

### TRADE UNIONISM IN MAURITIUS

In May, 1938, it became lawful for certain classes of workers (the majority in point of numbers) to form associations for the purpose of regulating relations with employers, and it became lawful for a strike or lockout to take place after official conciliation had failed. This reversal of the prohibitions of the Napoleonic code, on which Mauritian law is partly based, was not an answer to an overwhelming demand, or the recognition of facts beyond the power of government to control. It was the remedy proposed by a Commission of Enquiry into the troubles of 1937.

According to the Commission, the troubles were due in part to leaders who came from a different section of society and who misled the workers regarding their proper interests. The workers themselves seemed to have had often only a very vague idea of what they wanted and how they were going to obtain it. The Commission believed that, if the workers formed their own associations, they would elect their own leaders, would consult their own interests, and would gain definite opinions regarding their aims and objects. The weapon of the strike, to be used if all else failed, would render conciliation desirable as an alternative.

In view of the disorders that had taken place in 1937, the Commission felt it was taking a bold step in making this recommendation, and advised certain precautions. These precautions, as they appeared in the law, were :

- (a) a strike or lockout did not become legal till conciliation had been tried for thirty days;
- (b) if deemed expedient in the public interest, the Governor in Executive Council could refer a trade dispute to a court of arbitration;

- (c) all industrial associations had to apply for registration and declare their objects ;
- (d) qualification for membership should include regular and normal engagement in the industry or occupation which the association represented ;
- (e) the Registrar or the Director of Labour had the right of enquiry into the affairs of an association if they had reason to believe that the provisions of its constitution were not being observed, or that it was otherwise acting unlawfully ;
- (f) the Registrar had the power to expel any member, whether an office bearer or not, who the Registrar considered was acting improperly, and, if necessary, the Registrar could wind up the association ;
- (g) pensionable Government servants were not allowed to strike or to become members of an industrial association.

The Industrial Associations Ordinance, 1938, under which all these provisions were included, followed in the main the South African Conciliation Act of 1937. This Act was the result of long experience of trade unionism and industrial bargaining in South Africa, and it contained means to protect the interests of already established trade unions by not allowing rival unions to register in the same area, by not allowing trade unions to recruit members except from one particular undertaking, industry, trade or occupation and by making victimisation of a worker for trade union activities a criminal offence. This protection was undoubtedly of value to young trade unions in Mauritius, though now that an attempt is being made to gather all workers not engaged in the main industries into a single union it has not been found possible to register it. The union still continues to exist, for the law requires an industrial association to apply for registration, but does not require it to dissolve if its application is refused. The Act also helped trade unions by rendering conciliation agreements legally enforceable in a court of law, a provision which is rarely of use to employers here.

The Act contained protection for members and officials of trade unions against actions for tort when furthering a strike, but did not specifically protect them or other persons against liability when acting merely in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute, nor did it specifically permit acts in restraint of trade. These omissions were overlooked when the Mauritius ordinance was drawn up and were not repaired till 1948, but apparently no one in Mauritius had been aware that legal proceedings might have been taken against industrial associations on these grounds. It is by no means certain, in view of the differences between English and Mauritian law, whether in fact these grounds would have afforded room for an action to lie. The Act also did not apply

to domestic servants and farm employees, and the Mauritian law followed suit, but was amended to apply to these workers in 1943.

The picketing clauses of the English Trade Disputes Act of 1927 were added to the ordinance, but were modified in 1941. The Mauritian law also stipulated that the ordinance should only apply to the main industries mentioned in the schedule, but gave the Governor in Executive Council power to modify or add to it. There is no reason to suppose that if a group of workers in any industry which was not included in the schedule but to which the law applied had wished to form a *bona fide* association the Governor would have refused to add that industry to the schedule. This somewhat clumsy arrangement was however abolished in 1943, and the law now applies to all trades, industries and occupations. To the French or Hindi-speaking population the word trade union could not have meant very much, but the Mauritian law took elaborate precautions to avoid mentioning it, on the ground that it conveyed an impression of industrial disturbance. Later, when the first associations had not fulfilled the promises of their organisers, some of the blame was laid on the fact that they were not called trade unions. In 1944, an association applied for registration as a trade union, and after the shock was over, no reason could be found for not registering it, and it was duly registered as such. Industrial association had the advantage of being translatable into French as "association industrielle," and presumably the Hindi-speaking members of the population have kept their own name for the organisation, but no doubt some persons feel that a new name is a new start.

The precautions listed in paragraph 3 above were gradually relaxed as it was found that much more than the mere legal recognition of its existence was required in order to make a trade union influential. Strikes became legal after ten days of official conciliation instead of thirty. The Registrar's power to expel trade union members was curtailed. Qualification for membership of a trade union was to include past as well as present engagement in the trade represented. Pensionable Government servants were allowed to form unions. The remaining precautions were retained; although the Governor's power to refer disputes to arbitration has been rarely exercised, it is considered that this and other precautions are still necessary. The right of enquiry should perhaps be limited to the Registrar only and should be safeguarded against possible abuse.

Over forty associations were registered in the first few months after the law was passed. Some were associations of employers, but the great majority were associations of employees. Experience of combination and collective bargaining was very much lacking, and the aim and organisation of trade unions was hardly understood. The demand to form trade unions had not come from the

workers, but from their political leaders, who, with one outstanding exception, knew no more about trade unionism than their followers did. Friendly and co-operative credit societies had of course been known in Mauritius for many years, but their methods were not considered sufficiently glamorous by aspiring trade union leaders. Whilst the majority of the workers stood aloof and waited to see what would happen, the minority accepted as their representatives those who had the courage to declare themselves such and seem to have regarded them as lawyers armed with mysterious powers to force the employers to their will. The representatives did nothing to discourage this belief and confronted their employers with demands which would have amazed the most powerful trade union leaders in England. Employer and employee had known no other than a patriarchal system of employment, and the employers regarded the representatives as erring and disobedient children. According to the employers, an example had to be made and in many cases the representatives lost their employment. The law against victimisation was of course invoked, but in spite of the legal presumption against the employer, it was difficult to prove the guilt of the employer beyond reasonable doubt. The real sanction against victimisation lies in the refusal of the workers themselves to tolerate such treatment of their representatives, but when the alleged immunity of their leaders had been proved to be quite unfounded, the workers were not prepared to take any practical steps to give them support. Most of the officials who had thus lost their employment were either found work elsewhere by the Labour Department or were taken back by their original employers as though they were prodigal sons ; in some cases they became the most convinced anti-trade unionists amongst the workers.

Besides the misunderstanding of its organisation by the very persons who were supposed to lead or to form part of it, trade unionism suffered two further handicaps. Amongst the agricultural labourers, who form by far the largest group of workers in Mauritius, arrangements have for many years existed for resisting a fall in wages and for taking advantage of a demand for hands. Employers were no more united than the employees were, and competed with each other for the labour available. Groups of estates were clustered where the soil was richest, and in most cases it was not difficult for the labourer to transfer his services immediately to the estate on which the highest rates in the neighbourhood were being paid. No sooner did one estate raise its rates than the fields of its neighbours would be deserted unless they quickly followed suit. Most sugar planters cannot afford to wait and by so doing miss the favourable moment for the operation in progress, and the labourers had found that by offering their services on a day to day basis they were best placed to take advantage of every seasonal crisis. This system of course could do nothing against the long decline in sugar prices on the world market after the boom of the early

twenties, and the distress culminated in the labour troubles of 1937. It was not those strikes and processions, however, which really improved the labourer's lot, but the gradual rise in sugar prices which followed the crushing out of existence of marginal sugar-growing enterprises in other countries. The system also could do nothing for the labourers who were employed by the month and lived in the estate camps. These form about twenty per cent of the labour force, and, when prices and day-labourers' wages rose during the first years of the war, their wages lagged behind. This led in 1948 to a disturbance amongst the monthly employed labourers, and government had to intervene in order to raise their wages by statute, and has continued to do so every year since then as the same conditions prevail. Workers are now well represented on the wages advisory board, but the final decision is taken by the Governor in Executive Council.

The arrangement amongst day-labourers for taking advantage of the competition between employers was a well-tried system which had given good results as far as lay within its power. Trade unionism, which meant the extension of these arrangements on a far larger scale, would certainly have been less elastic and more difficult to adjust to the exigencies of an occasion. It was therefore viewed with extreme caution. Further, the field labourers had always for the past hundred years had the opportunity in case of need to appeal to Government through the department of the Protector of Immigrants, and at times this department had been very vigorous in enforcing the numerous clauses of the labour law. Indeed, old Indian labourers still address the Labour Commissioner not as Protector but by the name of a Protector still gratefully remembered though long gone to his grave. But as immigration fell off, the department had been allowed to transfer its principal attention from the sugar industry to the poor law. The Commission of Enquiry into the disturbances of 1937 advised that the department should extend its activities to the care of all workers, and accordingly its staff was considerably increased. No department precisely corresponding to the Protector's now exists in England, but in the past somewhat similar responsibilities were undertaken by magistrates and local authorities before the industrial revolution very much increased the complexity of the problems. Had this department not existed in Mauritius, had there been no means of counterbalancing the superior advantages of the employer in wage bargaining outside the sugar industry, it is possible that through stress of circumstances the workers would have been forced into combinations, but it is certain that the way would have been stormy and the disorganisation of industry severe. On the other hand, the Labour Department, as the Protector's department was renamed in 1938, encouraged the representatives of the workers to come forward, did what it could to protect them from victimis-

ation, and took the view that the loss of a case in the Courts was justified by the publicity thereby given to the law on the subject. Representatives were also helped to find work elsewhere, were introduced to employers, and were nominated to conciliation boards. Complaints from other workers which were brought to the department's attention by representatives were fully investigated and the union concerned was given the credit if the complaint was well founded and had been settled to the satisfaction of the parties. The Commission of 1943 considered that the department had gone too far in trying to act through a representative of the workers instead of calling upon Government to take direct action to raise wages and that it should have controlled more rigidly the administration of the internal affairs of the union chiefly concerned in these disturbances. It is however difficult to decide when guidance and control ends and usurpation of function begins, and the Commission may also have thought that the war further weighted the balance in favour of immediate industrial tranquillity rather than future representative organisation.

Whilst agricultural labourers were thus learning to grasp the possibilities and the limitations of industrial combination, the one man in Mauritius who had had practical day to day experience of trade union procedure in England, the late Mr. J. E. Anquetil, had come into direct collision with the Government. Mr. Anquetil was above all a fighter, but always a fighter in the interests of those whom he considered to be weak or oppressed, rarely or never in his own personal interests. He came back to Mauritius after a long stay in Europe and America, and found his country not merely no better off than when he had left it as a youth, but if anything worse off, for the sugar industry had been for more than ten years in the most serious difficulties on account of the low world price of sugar. Used to the higher living standard of English workers and primed with theories which showed an easy way out of economic difficulties if only certain parties would reform their unsocial practices, Mr. Anquetil's sense of pity for his fellow workers and hatred of seeming injustice led him to cast discretion to the winds and to launch at once into a campaign to right what appeared to him to be obvious wrongs. The resulting disturbances were soon allayed, and the brief detention which Mr. Anquetil suffered not only increased his prestige among workers, but also led him to reflect. When he began his campaign once more, he no longer attempted to arouse the masses to immediate and drastic exertions. Instead, he set out upon the long and arduous enterprise of teaching those who would listen to him the elements of trade union objects and organisation. As an official of the Mauritius Labour Party, he held meetings in all parts of the island, and though the journey was often wearisome, the attendance scanty, and the interest luke-warm, he never spared himself or relaxed his supreme effort to help his fellow countrymen to help themselves.

The effort was indeed supreme. His courage was greater than his physical strength, and the indomitable spirit was fast wearing out the frail and ageing body, but he knew his way was the only way. He went to the people, he spoke to them as one of themselves and one whom they trusted. He lashed the cowards, he strengthened the weak, he gave hope and an aim to those who were ready to stand up for themselves. He spoke till his voice died to a whisper and there seemed nothing of him left but the large eyes glowing with the fire of his enthusiasm. He stumped the country for six exhausting years, and at the end of 1944, he told the Labour Commissioner that the skilled workers of the sugar industry were organised and that they could form a single union to cover all their interests. He was assured of Government support for all responsible trade unionism, and the Engineering and Technical Union was duly registered. It was an immediate success, in fact it was the first union of any considerable size to function as a trade union, and it gave an example to all the struggling or straying associations around it. But Mr. Anquetil knew there was still much work to be done, and the first public announcement of the union showed its sense of responsibility towards the public. The devastating cyclones of 1945 had put a premium upon the demand for carpenters and joiners. The union appealed to those of them who were members of the union to reduce their charges to fellow workers and to the poorer members of the community whose houses had suffered damage. Had there been more Anquetils in the union the response would have been better. The union also assisted in a census of the available building workers, and finally Mr. Anquetil declared that in view of the great destruction caused to the sugar crop, the union would not press for the full increase of wages which the rise in the cost of living warranted.

In March, 1945, further help arrived. A Trade Union Adviser was appointed to Mauritius, and was able to put at the disposal of trade unionists his practical experiences and wide knowledge of trade union affairs. He came at the right moment to give guidance and assistance (particularly in amalgamation) to the unions which had been encouraged by the example of the Engineering and Technical Workers' Union, and he advanced the policy of Government a step further by arranging for permanent joint committees between employers and employees in place of the occasional conciliation-of-minimum-wage advisory boards. He contributed materially to the successful conclusion of agreements between various unions of employers and employees, and experimented with different kinds of voluntary arbitration courts, which were the means of overcoming apparent deadlocks. These arrangements certainly increased the standing of trade unions in the eyes of the employers, and gave the unions more responsibility and authority.

In June, 1946, the conciliation board that had been appointed to settle a dispute between Ferney sugar estate and the Engineering

and Technical Workers' Union, reported its failure to do so. The dispute concerned the dismissal of a branch president of the union, and there was something to be said on both sides. The union had to decide whether to push its protest as far as a strike. The crop had not yet begun, and therefore, the estate factory was not working, but it was being prepared for grinding in a few weeks' time. Though a strike at this time would be awkward for the employer, it would not throw other workers out of employment, as would be the case if the factory ceased grinding when the cutters were in the fields. The executive council of the union made its decision and the union's first strike began in July. The hundred odd artisans concerned ceased work and were guaranteed half pay from union funds. Although the number of strikers was small compared with the total membership of the union (about 4,000), nevertheless the president himself came to take charge of proceedings in order to show how a well-led and well-disciplined union conducted itself in industrial warfare.

The president was Mr. Anquetil. The moment had come to show the worth of his union. Previous strikes in Mauritius had almost always been marred by disorders, sabotage and personal violence. It was expected that similar events would occur again, that the union would prove unfit to control its members, and that possibly some of its officials would be arrested for disorderly conduct. In addition, the factory was not far from several places notorious for their bad characters, so that there was every possibility that the usual expectations would be fulfilled. Mr. Anquetil was determined that they should not. A fortnight later the dispute was referred by order of the Governor in Executive Council to a court of arbitration and Mr. Anquetil had won his victory. No incident had occurred and the union under his leadership had proved itself strong, determined and well-disciplined.

The court of arbitration decided against the union, but it was not the dispute but the conduct of the dispute that mattered. When the union a few weeks later met the representatives of the industry in order to press its claim for a considerable rise in wages, a settlement was quickly reached on most of the important points. Mr. Anquetil could now take a little rest, but the burden had been crushing. His health declined, and as the year drew to its close, he fell seriously ill. He had as his medical attendant Dr. Curé, the very man who before 1938 had asked in the name of the workers for the legalising of trade unionism and who was still mentioned with affection and respect in the remotest villages of Mauritius. Messages expressing the hope of an early recovery were received from the highest and the lowest in the Colony. He had around him his lieutenants; seeing their anxious faces, he had sufficient strength to whisper that he was not done yet and would be with them for years to come. He was right, his spirit is not done yet; but there are still only 23 registered unions with a

membership of 25,000 out of a working population more than five times as much, and for the future years his spirit must inspire those who wish to give trade unionism its proper place in industrial relations.

Nevertheless Mr. Anquetil's death has made a serious gap. He was a man of outstanding qualities and had had exceptional opportunities of learning about trade unionism. Trade unionism in the long run, however, does not depend on its leaders, but on its rank and file, and it is to the rank and file that most leaders will appeal for guidance. No ordinance has yet been passed to do for Mauritian education what the Forster and Balfour Acts of 1870 and 1891 have done for elementary education in England, and the Education Act of 1902 is still further in the future for Mauritius. Yet it is permissible to ask whether trade unionism in England would have reached its present responsible position without the education which those Acts gave to its rank and file. The employers who during the course of the nineteenth century looked askance at the declared ambitions of the trade union movement may have had some justification in doing so when due weight is given to the mental limitations under which many workers suffered as a result of their poverty and living conditions. There was no doubt that the worker knew better than anyone else where the shoe was pinching him, but that did not prove he knew best how to remake the shoe. Their leaders were fully alive to this difficulty, and perhaps not seldom found their best intentions thwarted by a solid wall of ignorance and prejudice amongst their own followers. In consequence education of trade union members in general subjects is no small or unimportant part of the labour movement.

Whether the actual leaders of Mauritian trade unions realise this difficulty or not, it would be impossible now to find in Mauritius teachers with sufficient education and sufficient time to undertake any large scale mass-education. Some leaders of Indo-Mauritian workers introduce into their speeches a certain amount of Hindu religious teaching, but it is doubtful whether this is the soil in which will flourish the same trade unionism that grew among the independent churches and chapels in English towns. A new kind of trade unionism may of course result. Other leaders appear to rest their confidence in the Soviet flag and prophecies of the near decease of capitalism. Others again have an unshaken belief that anything that can be done in other countries is equally and immediately possible in Mauritius, and that if it is not done it is because of the incompetence or selfishness of vested interests. No doubt those who wish to persuade their hearers must press their points hard, but one day their hearers may want to go further than the speakers intend.

Good leaders there still are, others no doubt are waiting to come forward, and bad leaders are not likely to lead for long; moreover, the Government is hastening its education programme as fast as

he circumstances permit; therefore the eventual future can be contemplated with hope. The immediate future is, however, less clear, and in Mauritius the margin which can be afforded to industrial disorganisation is a very narrow one. Employers must appreciate the difficulties with which responsible leaders have to contend and must go forward with them. Though actual appearances may be dark, it is the very worst moment for unconsidered reaction, and those who have enjoyed the advantage of being rained to think and to see both sides of a question, should now exercise that advantage to the full. Now also is the opportunity of trade union leaders to prove, as Mr. Anquetil was proving, that the privileges legally accorded to trade unionism in Mauritius can be exercised with a responsibility which renders superfluous the precautions still contained in the law.

## Chapter III : Public Finance and Taxation

### REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

The following tables give a comparison under main Heads of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Colony for the years ended the 30th June, 1939, 1945 and 1946.

<i>Main Head</i>	<i>REVENUE</i>		
	<i>Year ended 30th June</i>	<i>1939</i>	<i>1945</i>
	<i>Rs</i>	<i>Rs</i>	<i>Rs</i>
1. Customs ... ... ...	5,902,101	6,072,254	5,881,791
2. Port, Harbour and Light dues ... ... ...	549,500	410,141	340,730
3. Licences, Excise and Internal Revenue not otherwise classified ...	6,510,242	19,142,404	20,280,271
4. Fees of Court or Office and payments for specific services ... ... ...	851,782	1,987,818	2,108,821
5. Reimbursements ... ... ...	1,446,278	4,080,253	3,020,961
6. Rents ... ... ...	229,220	217,579	258,370
7. Interest ... ... ...	486,474	751,360	828,621
8. Miscellaneous receipts ...	328,054	625,829	1,003,891
9. Posts, Telegraphs and wire- less ... ... ...	370,610	442,955	505,911
10. Colonial Development Fund ... ... ...	15,858	79,331	101,291
11. Railways ... ... ...	871,933	41,902	57,981
12. Land sales ... ... ...	329	—	881
13. Special revenue ... ... ...	788,462	861,691	690,761
14. Assistance from Imperial Funds ... ... ...	—	—	7,822,791
	<b>17,850,838</b>	<b>84,713,517</b>	<b>42,898,111</b>

The only items which call for comment when making a comparison between 1944-45 and 1945-46 are items 3 and 14. The increase in the former is largely accounted for by Succession Fee which rose by nearly one million rupees. The latter item represents a free grant and an interest free loan by the Imperial Government for the replanting with sugar cane of land compulsorily put under food crops as an emergency measure.

## EXPENDITURE

<i>Main Head</i>	<i>Year ended 30th June</i>		
	<b>1989</b>	<b>1945</b>	<b>1946</b>
	<b>Rs</b>	<b>Rs</b>	<b>Rs</b>
1. Public Debt ... ...	2,292,014	1,961,340	1,983,740
2. Pensions and Gratuities	1,695,428	1,794,910	1,842,944
3. Governor ... ...	82,659	72,468	105,497
4. Secretariat ... ...	88,898	218,118	150,461
5. Legislature ... ...	12,889	19,715	18,798
6. Accountant General ...	197,112	208,516	175,882
7. Agriculture ... ...	542,286	521,187	575,294
8. Audit ... ...	79,185	75,258	77,124
9. Customs, Port and Marine	613,206	705,486	898,389
10. Ecclesiastical ... ...	211,914	198,707	198,707
11. Education ... ...	1,441,412	1,568,015	1,824,076
12. Electricity and Telephones	178,248	381,575	613,825
13. Forests ... ...	203,331	666,978	611,989
14. Granary ... ...	79,421	48,999	58,084
15. Harbour ... ...	143,755	157,820	149,184
16. Health ... ...	1,477,202	1,989,914	2,466,221
17. Industrial School ...	34,298	42,739	43,195
18. Institute and Public Museum	17,115	15,971	16,232
19. Judicial ... ...	402,390	415,520	434,244
20. Legal ... ...	99,564	92,715	85,980
21. Labour ... ...	770,307	898,471	925,828
22. Military ... ...	985,903	4,187,534	2,505,128
23. Miscellaneous ... ...	1,107,217	682,601	1,109,286
24. Municipal ... ...	398,817	—	—
25. Observatory ... ...	41,543	41,382	30,418
26. Police ... ...	970,903	1,014,930	1,095,686
27. Poll Tax ... ...	—	550,451	1,842,185
28. Posts and Telegraphs ...	322,521	298,036	295,716
29. Printing Office ... ...	107,772	168,783	181,565
30. Prisons ... ...	178,741	291,985	399,860
31. Registrar General ...	118,897	105,299	116,464
32. Statistical Bureau ...	—	8,464	80,281
33. Public Works and Surveys	840,007	451,545	513,761
34. Public Works and Surveys Annually Recurrent ...	1,039,379	1,095,786	1,517,981
35. Public Works and Surveys Extraordinary ...	228,204	154,769	899,275
36. Railways ... ...	765,444	—	—
37. Special Expenditure ...	6,788,462	821,948	1,842,893
38. Cyclone Expenditure ...	—	1,108,809	8,539,801
39. War Services ... ...	—	8,868,549	9,225,047
40. Detainment Camp ...	—	1,017,554	188,977
	<b>24,000,939</b>	<b>31,882,797</b>	<b>48,587,758</b>

In comparing 1944-45 with 1945-46, Items 22, 27, 37, 38 and 40 call for comment.

- Item 22.** The contribution towards Military Expenditure which in 1944-45 was Rs 4,083,000 was reduced in 1945-46 to Rs 2,500,000. In 1946-47 it has been further reduced to Rs 1,000,000.
- Item 27.** Repayment of revenue increased by approximately 1½ million rupees due to refund of Excess Profit Tax.
- Item 37.** Railway expenditure exceeded revenue by approximately 1 million rupees, due to reduced haulage of sugar canes, in turn due to reduced crop owing to the 1945 cyclones.
- Item 38.** Expenditure under this head was principally in respect of loans made for the repairs of private houses, estate buildings and factories damaged by the cyclones and for the replanting in cane of sugar lands previously devoted to food crops. The last mentioned expenditure was offset by a grant and an interest-free loan from the Imperial Government—see Revenue Item 14.
- Item 40** The Detainment Camp was closed down during the year 1945.

#### PUBLIC DEBT

The Public Debt of the Colony on the 30th June, 1946, was Rs 35,412,147. Against this liability there was an accumulated Sinking Fund of Rs 15,996,720.

Local loan issues accounted for Rs 19,544,347 of the Public Debt, as detailed below :

	Rs.
Mauritius Loan 1922	... ... ... 5,000,000
Sugar Industry Loan (No. 3) 1929	... 8,400,000
Agricultural Bank Loan (No. 1) 1937	... 1,825,500
Agricultural Bank Loan (No. 2) 1937	... 1,600,000
Municipal Electric Lighting Loan 1934	48,000
Mauritius War Loan 1941	... ... 4,000,000
War Savings Certificates	... ... 518,347
Mauritius Loan 1961	... ... ... 8,157,500
	<hr/>
	19,544,347
	<hr/>

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**(omitting Special Funds deposited in the public Treasury)**

LIABILITIES	Rs.	ASSETS	Rs.
Other Governments	575,562	Advances	8,699,069
Deposits	3,572,987	Cash Balances	
Loan Funds unexpended	3,159,106	etc.	10,503,439
Reserve Fund	12,000,000	Investments	22,061,082
General Revenue Balance	17,841,015		82,564,471
		Deduct :	
		Balances of special funds etc. in hands of Treasurer	4,614,870
			27,949,601
Rs. 86,648,670		Rs. 86,648,670	

**DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN HEADS OF TAXATION AND THEIR YIELD**

		1944-45	1945-46
		Rs.	Rs.
Customs—Import Duties	...	5,987,815	5,761,722
Export Duties	...	184,440	120,074
Excise duty on rum	...	5,802,089	4,971,664
Tobacco Excise	...	2,567,104	3,176,770
Licence duties	...	1,517,123	1,886,884
Poll Tax	...	2,795,389	2,068,829
Companies Tax	...	1,764,232	1,574,022
Excess Profits Tax	...	2,287,681	2,738,225

**CUSTOMS TARIFF**

The customs tariff is of considerable length, duties being both *ad valorem* and specific. Duties are charged under the general tariff unless it is proved that the goods concerned are entitled to imperial preference. The majority of items in the tariff yielding large revenue pay the specific rate of duty.

**EXCISE AND STAMP DUTIES**

Excise duty on rum and tobacco provides almost the entire excise revenue. Local wine, matches, power spirit, vinegar, tinctures, drugs and perfumed spirits also contribute to excise revenue.

**STAMP DUTIES**

Stamp duties are of three kinds :

Schedule A to the Stamps (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1926,

specifies the instruments or writings which are subject to a duty in proportion to the size of the paper used. The tariff ranges from Rs 0.25 cs to R 1.50 cs.

Schedule B specifies the instruments or writings which are subject to a fixed stamp duty. The amounts vary from R 0.05 d to Rs 15.00.

Schedule C specifies the instruments or writings which are subject to an *ad valorem* duty. These include Bills of Exchange, Promissory Notes, Policies of Insurance, Debentures. The duties are mainly on a sliding scale.

By the passing of Ordinance 18 of 1946 and the publication of Government Notice No. 138 of 1946, stamp duty ceased to be claimed on receipts for salaries, wages, fees and other moneys paid to any person in respect of personal service, and on acquittances given on bills for the refund of expenditure actually incurred by Government servants in the discharge of their duties.

The stamp duties collected during the financial year 1945-46 amounted to Rs 219,359.60 cs in respect of impressed paper. The duties levied by means of adhesive stamps are merged in the proceeds of sales of postage stamps.

#### GRADUATED POLL TAX

The graduated poll tax of Mauritius is really an income tax and not a poll tax (in the sense that it is used for certain African colonies).

During the year 1946, an ordinance of some importance was passed. Previously wear and tear had not been allowed as a deduction in computing profits for poll tax purposes. Under the new act, wear and tear allowances on buildings and on plant and machinery will be made in future. Provision has also been made for an obsolescence allowance, i.e. a special allowance where obsolete plant is sold at a price below the written-down value of the plant concerned.

The occasion was also taken to introduce "initial allowances" both for buildings and for plant and machinery on lines similar to those introduced in the United Kingdom by the Income Tax Act 1945. The object of this allowance is to encourage the modernisation of factories by allowing a certain proportion of the capital cost of new assets to be written off as a charge for poll tax purposes immediately the asset is installed. In the case of new buildings, the allowance is 10 per cent of the cost, and in the case of new plant and machinery it is 20 per cent.

Finally a "special allowance" was made to the sugar factories in the Colony. During the war owing to the difficulty of obtaining new machinery, the sugar companies had been unable to maintain their plant in first-class condition—renewals had necessarily been allowed to fall in arrear. For poll-tax purposes only renewals actually made could be charged as an expense, and, as

wear and tear was not allowed, it was thought that the factories had been assessed on figures which really were in excess of their true profits. Provision had been made in the 1946 Act for a "special allowance" (in the form of an increased wear and tear allowance for a period of five years) to compensate for this.

During 1946 the rate of tax applicable to companies was increased from 30 per cent to 35 per cent of the net profits. Surtax (a tax of 5 per cent on the profits of companies in excess of Rs 50,000) was not re-imposed in 1946. On individuals the following schedule shows the tax applicable to various incomes :

<i>Incomes in excess of</i>	<i>but not exceeding</i>	<i>Tax payable</i>
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
4,000	5,000	60
5,000	6,000	90
6,000	7,000	120
7,000	8,000	160
8,000	9,000	220
9,000	10,000	280
10,000	11,000	340
11,000	12,000	410
12,000	13,000	490
13,000	14,000	580
14,000	15,000	680
15,000	16,000	800
16,000	17,000	940
17,000	18,000	1,100
18,000	19,000	1,270
19,000	20,000	1,450
20,000	22,500	1,800
22,500	25,000	2,300
25,000	27,500	2,900
27,500	30,000	3,600
30,000	32,500	4,500
32,500	35,000	5,600
35,000	37,500	6,800
37,500	40,000	8,000
40,000	42,500	9,200
42,500	45,000	10,400
45,000	47,500	11,650
47,500	50,000	12,900

For incomes exceeding Rs 50,000 but not exceeding Rs 100,000 the tax payable is Rs 12,900 plus 50 per cent of the amount by which the income exceeds Rs 50,000.

For incomes exceeding Rs 100,000 the tax payable is Rs 87,900 plus 60 per cent of the amount by which the income exceeds Rs 100,000.

## EXCESS PROFITS TAX

Excess profits tax which had been in force in the Colony for five years was not reimposed in 1946.

## ESTATE DUTY

Estate and succession duties are based on the size of the estate and the degree of relationship of the beneficiary as provided for in Ordinance No. 47 of 1914 modified by Ordinance No. 21 of 1930.

The duty collected during the year 1946 amounted to Rs 649,029.66 cs.

## Chapter IV : Currency and Banking

## CURRENCY

Notes and silver coin in circulation at the end of the last three financial years were as follows :

		30th June 1944. Rs.	30th June 1945 Rs.	30th June 1946 Rs.
Notes	...	21,781,970	25,181,970	26,121,855
Coin	...	1,705,210	1,705,210	1,705,210
Total	...	23,487,180	26,887,180	27,827,065

The amount of the Note Security Fund, calculated at the mean market price of the investments on the 30th June, 1946, stood at Rs 28,887,605 i.e. 110.89 per cent of the value of the notes in circulation.

The Coin Security Fund amounted to Rs 763,201 at the 30th June, 1946, which, added to the bullion value of the issued and unissued coins which amounted to Rs 2,158,454, gives a total of Rs 2,916,655, against a face value of the Mauritius silver coins minted of Rs 2,550,000.

## BANKING

There are three banks in the Colony viz :

- (a) The Mauritius Commercial Bank,
- (b) The Mercantile Bank of India, and
- (c) Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas).

The Mauritius Commercial Bank was established in 1838, and has a paid up capital of Rs 2,000,000 made up of 10,000 shares of Rs 200 each. The total amount of deposits on the 31st December, 1946, was Rs 30,328,036. The Mercantile Bank of India Limited took over the business of the Bank of Mauritius Limited on the 3rd May, 1916. The total paid up capital is £1,050,000. The deposits

made locally on the 31st December, 1946, amounted to Rs 8,679,100. Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) has a paid up capital of £4,975,500. The total deposits of the local bank on the 1st December, 1946, amounted to Rs 12,142,717. This bank, which is affiliated with Barclays' Bank Limited, was founded in 1925, and represents the amalgamation of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank Limited, the Colonial Bank and the National Bank of South Africa Limited. A branch of the last named bank was established in Mauritius in December, 1919. In February, 1926, its business was taken over by Barclays' Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) following the amalgamation already mentioned. The bank acts as agents for Barclays Overseas Development Corporation.

Offices of the Government Savings Bank are established in the nine districts of the Island with a head office in Port Louis. The total number of depositors at the 30th June, 1946, was 55,022, compared with 51,239 in the preceding year, with deposits amounting to Rs 17,180,346 as against Rs 15,064,637. Interest is paid at the rate of 2½ per cent per annum.

The Mauritius Agricultural Bank, which was established under Ordinance No. 1 of 1936, completed its tenth year of existence in 1946. The capital of the bank (Rs 10,000,000) was provided by Government which raised loans at 8½ per cent per annum for this purpose. Of the Rs 3,600,000 raised locally Rs 180,000 as drawn bonds has now been refunded. The bank is self supporting and meets Sinking Fund charges on the loans raised to finance it. The amount of such contributions to the 31st December, 1946, was Rs 511,040.

Its balance sheet as at the 31st December, 1946, may be condensed thus :

<i>Liabilities</i>		<i>Assets</i>	
	Rs.		Rs.
Treasury ... ...	10,158,236	Loans ... ...	10,645,196
Staff Fund and other Internal Accounts ... ...	114,769	Cash ... ...	64,099
Reserve & P. & L. account ... ...	477,380	Investments ... ...	17,952
	<hr/>	Other assets ... ...	28,138
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	Rs. 10,750,885		Rs. 10,750,885
	<hr/>		<hr/>

Since 1937, when it started operations the bank has paid out Rs 14,681,885 in loans.

Ordinance No. 1 of 1936 provided for a minimum loan of Rs 5,000. In 1940, this was abolished and the bank was authorised to make loans of any amount. Under Ordinance No. 40 of 1940 it was authorised to issue bills to be purchased by the Accountant General up to Rs 1,000,000 with the proviso that this fresh capital

would be used exclusively to make loans of less than Rs 5,000 to small planters, i.e. planters who supply less than 1,000 tons of cane yearly to a factory.

Bills under this Ordinance outstanding on the 31st December 1946, amounted to Rs 286,510.

In 1944 the managing director, who had been appointed by the Secretary of State, severed his connection with the bank upon the expiration of his contract. On his recommendation the post of managing director was abolished, his duties devolving upon a chairman and a manager. The chairman is appointed annually by the Secretary of State. Under the new arrangements, loans are granted by the board on a majority of votes. The chairman has a casting vote.

After the cyclones of 1945 Government decided to make loans to those whose property had suffered damage and to those planters who were in need of money to replant with cane land which had been compulsorily put under other foodstuffs as an emergency measure. The bank was entrusted with the making and recovery of these loans (Ordinance No. 28 of 1945).

On the 31st December, 1946, loans for these purposes had been paid to the amount of Rs 18,085,181, of which Rs 14,506,042 was for replanting, Rs 2,808,857 for repairs to industrial buildings and Rs 720,732 for repairs to houses.

## Chapter V : Commerce

The main imports are :—rice, flour, tobacco, cigars and cigarettes, unmanufactured tobacco, wines and spirits, tea, cotton piece goods, silk manufactures, oil and motor spirit.

The one industry of the Colony is sugar, together with ancillary industries, such as high degree alcohol which has been for the past four years sent to the United Kingdom for the manufacture of gin. During the war a large quantity of this high degree alcohol was used as motor spirit, being denatured with 10 per cent petrol. This reduced the quantity of petrol that had to be imported.

The normal quantity of sugar exported is about 300,000 tons but the crop is dependent upon the weather to a greater extent than most agricultural ventures. Without the presence of cyclones in the distance and consequent rain the crop would not reach anything like 300,000 tons. On the other hand if one of these cyclones hits the island or comes very close then the damage may be considerable. In 1945 the quantity shipped was 184,000 tons as a result of three bad cyclones early in the year.

Though the Colony is essentially agricultural, it barely produces one tenth of the foodstuffs required by the population. Before the

war 60,000 tons of rice were imported annually from India and Burma. Rice is the staple diet of the majority of the population ; it has unfortunately been unobtainable except in very small quantities for the last four or five years. Flour has been imported in increased quantities from Australia. Tobacco and cigarettes, spirits, confectionery, preserved provisions, machinery for the sugar industry when available, cotton, woollen and silk goods, motor vehicles, soap, and paint are all imported from the United Kingdom. Gunny bags for the sugar crop formerly came from India but during the war the local aloe fibre bags have been used with success and it is hoped to continue using them.

Vegetables are grown locally and some fruits but no citrus fruit. Before the war fresh fruit, butter, bacon and hams were imported from South Africa and potatoes from Kenya and Madagascar.

Wines before the war were imported from France but South African wines are now imported on a fairly large scale. Cattle are imported from Madagascar and some from the Dependency of Rodrigues, together with pigs and poultry. Wine, matches and tobacco are all manufactured locally ; the wine from local fruits or imported raisins when available, matches from local timber and imported materials and tobacco from locally grown leaves, sometimes blended with imported leaf from the United States of America.

The value of the trade of the Colony in 1946 was Rs 120,500,000 as compared with Rs 90,000,000 in 1945 and Rs 72,750,000 in 1938.

## Chapter VI: Production

### AGRICULTURE

Mauritius is, essentially, an island of agriculture ; there is no source of wealth other than the soil. As the tilling of the soil and the raising of crops is so very largely dependent for success on climatic conditions, it will be instructive to see what part these played during the year 1946. Growth conditions were, on the whole, favourable during the year under review : temperature was generally above normal and rainfall abundant and well distributed. The year began with a shortage in rainfall which was broken by a cyclone of moderate intensity experienced at the beginning of February. From then onwards, beneficial rains were received up to the end of the growing season. Winter conditions were generally unfavourable to sugar cane maturation owing to abnormal heat and moisture.

At the beginning of 1946 the area under sugar cane crop was estimated at 183,000 acres, of which 94,000 acres belonged to estates with or without a factory. The remaining acreage was in the hands of small cultivators.

The replanting, in cane, of food crop lands has been steadily pursued so that the total acreage in cane has increased to a considerable extent during the year. Except in the North of the Island cane yields have been generally below expectation ; this may be ascribed to two main factors : (i) cyclone damage, particularly in the South-Western localities, and (ii) a high proportion of arrowed canes in many localities which could not be harvested early enough in the crop season and which suffered a loss in weight due to drying out.

The total sugar manufactured amounted approximately to 290 thousand metric tons and fell short of expectation by a considerable margin.

The exportable sugar crop was purchased by the Ministry of Food of His Majesty's Government.

Alcohol manufacture from molasses for export, for local consumption and for power remains undiminished.

Some 550 acres of tobacco, of flue and air-cured types, were grown in the Island for local consumption. This crop is produced by a large number of planters, most of them possessing less than an acre. Weather conditions proved unfavourable during the second quarter of the year and severe damage was caused to seed beds by "Damping Off" and insects. Several young plantations have suffered heavily from Black Shank disease, some being almost totally destroyed. Conditions improved during the months of July and August, beneficial rains helping the plantations, but deteriorated again in September and October owing to the prevalence of strong winds and deficiency in rainfall. The rains which occurred in November caused secondary growth resulting in the production of poor grade leaf.

Fibre is turned out by a number of the smaller estates and is sold to the Government Sack Factory. The cyclones of 1945 played havoc with fibre plants from which they have not yet completely recovered. For this reason the crop was about 33 per cent on the short side and the Sack Factory was forced to work for part of the year on one shift only. The quantity of fibre received at the Sack Factory was about 700 metric tons. Field trials with fibre plants were pursued under the supervision of the officers of the Agricultural Division of the Department of Agriculture. There was no export of fibre during the year.

Tea continues to develop and there are now over 2,000 acres of this crop. The outstanding event in connection with the tea industry was the visit of Captain E. G. B. de Mowbray, an expert appointed by the Colonial Office to inquire into the industry. During his stay in the Island, he visited a large number of tea plantations

and all tea factories. Captain de Mowbray's report is under earnest consideration by Government.

The planting of food crops on estates of 20 arpents or more of cane ceased to be compulsory in 1945. Many estates, however, continued to grow maize in cane interlines for their own requirements. Some estates grow food crops for the benefit of their labourers. The cultivation, mainly by small Indian growers, of maize, manioc, sweet potatoes and potatoes continues. Rice has also been grown and it is estimated that some 2,000 acres of this food were under cultivation at the beginning of 1946.

No new pest or disease of agricultural interest appeared. A start has been made in the search for insect enemies of the local destructive weed known as *Conde* and there is a special officer stationed in Trinidad, British West Indies, for this purpose.

#### ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

As far as livestock is concerned the interest evinced during war-time in pig breeding has now evaporated to some extent on account of the paucity of food for these animals. Poultry rearing has improved but here again feed is a difficult point. Milk tends to be scarce and expensive for the same reason. However, the recently imported Friesland bulls are now all doing well and are in popular demand. Old, crippled and unproductive milch cows fetch good prices for meat. Madagascar bullocks were imported for meat in fairly satisfactory numbers. Milk production is in the hands of small Indian proprietors.

#### FISHERIES

The Fisheries Branch was reorganised in 1943 and attached to the Supplies Control Office in Port Louis. A head-office was created to co-ordinate the work of inspectors and guards and for general administrative purposes.

One of the first steps taken by the Branch was to cancel all former permits and to issue new ones specifying landing stations and selling centres.

During the period of shortage of food supply, the main aim of the Branch has been to organise and increase the supply of fish to markets.

Reserves have been created along the coast in which net-fishing is controlled and where it has been systematically carried out during periods of inadequate meat supply.

A certain number of Fish-Landing Stations have been established around the coast, most of which are under control.

A Fisheries Advisory Committee has been created to advise the Branch on various matters and a Selection Committee set up to select ex-Servicemen when vacancies arise. A large proportion of the personnel of the Branch consists of ex-Servicemen.

The professional fishermen of the Island are engaged in net-,

basket- and line-fishing. One of the aims of the Fisheries Branch will be to establish a co-operative system to ensure security and fair remuneration for the fishermen.

The fishing industry of the Colony suffered heavy losses as a result of the three cyclones experienced in 1945. Help was received from the Forest Department in the way of repairs to the boats and fishing material.

Scientific investigations have been carried out under the supervision of Dr. J. F. G. Wheeler, Marine Biologist.

The erection of a laboratory at Pointe-aux-Sables has been completed.

#### FORESTRY

Production is organised by the Forest Department in respect of most Crown Lands, by lessees in the case of the Pas Geometriques (strip of coastal land round the coast) and by landowners over the remainder of forest lands. Except in the minor case of pine-box pieces exported to Madagascar to contain emergency supplies of tinned meat the whole production is for local consumption.

The work of timber and fuel conversion in the forest is invariably piecework, some of the timber going to sawmills in the round but most of it hewn square. In Crown Forests clearing for plantations is by contract tender; tending of plantations is by daily-paid labour with a few boy learners and the same applies to nursery work.

The greater number of the forest sawyers and woodcutters are Creoles as opposed to Indo-Mauritians whilst the silvicultural workers are mainly Indo-Mauritians.

#### *Manner of Meeting Deficiencies and increased Demands for Timber during the War*

##### *Government Control*

There is in this Colony no private firm or individual contractor capable of working a concession, or a forest, as a unit and of making the fullest use of all categories of timber. Such an operation would entail a well organised labour force, one or more sawmills, a large number of lorries for transport and facilities for storage and disposal of sawn timber. While it is true that the forest area suitable for exploitation on this system is small, the fact remains that no outside agency was available to relieve the Department of any appreciable part of the control and supervision of utilisation.

Sawmilling in as many as 3 Government and 12 private sawmills involved much supervision and it is now recognised that a medium sized Forest Department mill imported in 1939-40 would have shown a saving in cost and supervision. Before 1939 only 2 private sawmills existed.

*Rationing of Timber*

Sales of sawn timber were virtually confined to Service Departments until 1945. A scheme of rationing, unconnected with the war, started in 1945 after the cyclones of January, February and March. The public were allowed to buy only 1,000 running feet, not exceeding 12' in length, of pine boards up to 8" wide, and 1,500 running feet of eucalyptus boards per month after enquiry and recommendation by the Director of Public Works for the area outside towns and by the Municipality and Boards in the towns. No private timber was requisitioned during the war: about 10,000 cubic feet log volume of standing camphor remained in and near Curepipe town and survived the cyclones.

*Eucalyptus*

(Mainly eucalyptus robusta.) For every purpose in normal construction work for which pine was unsuitable, eucalyptus robusta was accepted as a substitute for the gurjun and singapore that was available before the war. Though a refractory timber of low grade, it proved most valuable and saved many thousands of cubic feet of shipping space needed for other freight, and its sale at moderate rates was highly satisfactory to the Forest Department.

*Indigenous*

The heavy hardwoods of the indigenous flora provided an admirable reserve of timber suitable for the most exacting conditions.

*Calvaria major* (Tambalacoque) gave complete satisfaction as a timber for dock construction.

*Callophyllum inophyllum* (Tatamaka) was used for boat building and lorry bodies besides general construction where large dimensions were not essential.

*The effect of the present War on the demand for, and the supply of timber and forest produce*

The table at the end of this section shows how imports of timber fell during the war years until in 1948 they were nil and how a large and rapid rise in local production took place. This serves to underline the importance of a local reserve of home-grown timber for use in emergency. The species, grade or quality of the timber is relatively unimportant, for consumers are ready to improvise and adjust their methods when overseas supplies are cut off. Greatly increased quantities of Pine and Eucalyptus planks and boards were supplied at a rapid rate to the services and government departments, notably the Public Works Department. Indents met were in respect of transmission poles, 300 large sized baulks for dry docks, sleepers, shingles, pine boards for shuttering in concrete construction, wireless poles and scaffolding, and all wooden constructional parts for temporary buildings built by the Services and Public Works Department. Some reconversion and most of

the delivery had to be effected by the Forest Department. Eucalyptus and Pine (except for the larger valuable logs) were mainly hewn into roughly adzed squares in the forest to be broken down in circular saws.

In 1944 the peak of war consumption of timber was passing and the Forest Department began to supply the public on a ration basis.

#### *Labour Supply*

The very greatly extended utilisation of local woods caused early and repeated difficulties in the supply and distribution of labourers, especially among skilled woodcutters.

The National Service registration which operated from 1942 enabled the Forest Department to obtain exemptions for essential workers in the Forest Department cadre, among temporary overseers and all grades of artisans and labourers. There were few cases in which men had to be "directed" to particular works by judicial order. The rationing scheme made it difficult to transfer men from one area to another because the rations were drawn from an individual retailer and new provision would be needed for each change of address: special facilities were arranged as regards transport and temporary housing.

In 1943, at the peak of the period of maximum production the total number engaged in primary and secondary forest industries of all kind amounted to over 6,000.

#### *The effect of the cyclone on the supply of forest produce*

Pine plantations were wrecked by the two cyclones in January and February, 1945. The Department began at once to work over the fallen and broken material. Later it was found that the pine trees (Chinese) which were not apparently damaged gradually withered and died. Eucalyptus plantations were blown down to a considerable extent but the urgency of harvesting is not so great on account of the fact that the timber of this species is very slow to rot—trees blown down in the 1931 cyclone are still being harvested. The demand for this timber will undoubtedly continue for some time yet. The indigenous forest is protected by a shelter of wood: there was extremely little damage.

640,000 poles were cut and consignments were arranged to 100 schools. The work was carried out in a space of 3 months with the co-operation of Education and Police Department officers and the managers of estates.

#### *Eucalyptus Snout Beetle*

*Gonipterus scutellatus*, the snout beetle, caused serious degradations by defoliating eucalyptus trees and delaying growth. At the close of 1946, the parasite introduced by the Agricultural Department from East Africa, *anaphoidea nitens*, was reducing the numbers of the beetle; following release the parasite was re-taken some time later as much as four miles away from areas where released.

<i>Sources of Supply</i>	<i>Production of timber log volume</i>	<i>Value in Rupees</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Imports log volume estimated</i>	<i>Value in Rupees</i>
Crown Forests and Pas Geometriques	117,800	80,500	1939	840,000	787,200
do.	184,300	94,600	1940	484,000	439,900
do.	175,300	146,000	1941	286,000	396,200
do.	488,100	400,000	1942	78,000	185,000
do.	391,600	509,000	1943	Nil	Nil
do.	310,700	390,000	1944	16,000	59,000
Crown Forests, Pas Geometriques and Private Sources	962,200*	488,000	1945	133,000	528,700
do.	568,600	448,000	1946	87,000	151,400

\* Including cyclone relief poles.

*Land Tenure*

From 1939 to the end of 1946 there have been no significant changes in local land tenure. There has been no tendency for land to pass from one class or community to another. Transactions in land are for the most part normal transactions between individuals or companies and the use to which the land is put has not been affected. This statement is qualified by the fact that during the past ten years about 10,000 acres of agricultural land have been taken for urban development and have therefore been lost to agriculture. This serious problem cannot be effectively tackled in the absence of an aerial survey, which it is hoped will be made in the near future.

*Stoppages during 1946*

Besides the occasional half-day or half-hour strikes at the sack factory, due to friction between the management and the workers, mostly women, there were four other stoppages, two concerning sugar-industry field labourers, one concerning sugar factory workers, and one concerning shipyard workers. The first strike took place at Ferney sugar estate just before the crop began. The dispute concerned the dismissal of the president of the local branch of the Technical Workers' Union. A conciliation board was held, but could not arrive at a settlement. Reference to compulsory arbitration was not advised and the union was not prepared to agree to voluntary arbitration. As it was clear that a deadlock had been reached, the union ordered its members in the estate factory to cease work and practically every man in the factory, though they were not all members of the union, downed tools. The crop had not actually begun, so the factory was not crushing, but its machinery was being put in order for an early start. After a week the strike was extended to a neighbouring factory, and then, when it seemed that the strike might extend further and imperil the sugar crop, the Governor intervened and ordered that the dispute should be submitted to arbitration. The men then returned to work and remained at work, though the decision of the arbitrator, a judge of the Supreme Court, was against them. The union allowed them half pay during the strike, whether members of the union or not. Each factory had about 100 workers. Union officials told those who were not qualified to be members of the union to return to work. Although the strike took place close to a district that had a bad reputation for disorderliness, the union carried on its fight in perfect order. The credit for this excellent achievement must above all be given to the late Mr. Anquetil, the president of the union, who spared no pains to ensure that all went well. It is not improbable that the privations he had then to endure were partly responsible for the continued ill health which pursued him for the rest of the year and which ended, to the wide-spread and sincere regret of very many persons, in his death at the age of 63.

The dismissed branch president was not reinstated, but the lesson of this disciplined and well-led collective action was not lost on the employers. Later negotiations between the employers and the union for the renewal of their annual wage agreement, with considerable rises on account of the cost of living, reached a successful conclusion much in the union's favour. The next strike, this time affecting the monthly-employed field labourers on a couple of estates, about 600 men in all, only lasted a day, but negotiations dragged on for some time. As the crop was about to start, the moment was critical, but in the end a compromise arrangement was patched up which, with goodwill on the manager's side, lasted throughout the season. The president of the local Agricultural Labourers' Union negotiated on behalf of the workers concerned, but it is not known if they were actual paying members of the union ; he was of course well known to them and had conducted some religious ceremonies for them. The dispute turned on the regularity bonus granted by the Minimum Wage Order ; the men wished it to be a *pro rata* bonus, but the managers feared absenteeism. It is believed that the objection to the regularity condition may have begun with the women workers, whose household cares made some absenteeism obligatory. The shipyard strike concerned 300 artisans and lasted several days. The Technical Workers' Union was negotiating a wage agreement on behalf of the men, and had almost reached a settlement when the men struck. The union officials asked the men to return to work, but they refused to do so. At length the dispute was referred to voluntary arbitration and ended with an agreement reached directly between the men and their employers. The agreement was endorsed by the arbitrators. As several small ships were in dock at the time, this strike caused some inconvenience to the Colony and it is regrettable that the men thought fit to ignore the advice of the union officials. In the case of the artisans, their strikes were both legal ; in the case of the agricultural labourers, their strike was illegal, but as it had only lasted a day, no complaint was lodged. A subsequent stoppage of labourers in the Flacq area was not only not an illegal strike, as the Labour Commissioner had not granted a conciliation board, but was not even a strike at all, as the men were day labourers who were not bound by any contract. On only one estate did work cease completely, and it was resumed again when the cause of complaint, which was not the local union's dispute, had been settled. Several hundred day workers absented themselves for several days from five or six estates, whilst the local agricultural labourers' union demanded a 25 per cent rise in wages. Attendance gradually returned to normal. The union leaders made speeches but gave no strike pay. The most noteworthy event was a request by a neighbouring estate manager that he should be allowed to employ the strikers on his estate at of course the original rate of pay. The Labour Department refused the lorry permits, as it had

refused permits to the employers affected by the strike to recruit black-leg labour.

#### ACTIVITIES OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Six new Societies were registered during the year. Of these 4 were in Mauritius and 2 in Rodrigues. The number of Societies in active operation on the 31st December, 1946, were 77 in Mauritius and 16 in Rodrigues, making a grand total of 93 active Societies. Excepting the Rodrigues Fishermen Co-operative Credit Society Limited, the others are all of the unlimited liability type. Of the 24 Societies left to manage their own affairs in accordance with the terms of the previous report, they seemed, with two or three exceptions, to have worked satisfactorily along fully responsible lines.

The facility accorded to members to increase their shareholdings by deductions from loans granted to them is proving most beneficial. This system serves to promote thrift among a class of persons of limited means. It is also a step towards strengthening the financial position of the Societies, protecting the unlimited liability and assisting in its ultimate abolition by hastening the collection of sufficient owned funds to meet the legitimate need of the members. The contributions in this direction in respect of the financial year 1945-46 amounted to Rs 39,182.

The amount of money loaned from Government during the year was Rs 36,300. This has been advanced to 8 Societies in Mauritius and 2 in Rodrigues. Instalments of loans due to Government totalling Rs 28,585 were punctually repaid to the Treasury. During the same period Rs 5,244.08 interest was paid on Government loans held. The aggregate amount of advances due to Government as at 31st December, 1946, was Rs 217,110 and was held by 57 Societies in Mauritius and 15 Societies in Rodrigues.

The Societies have continued to be encouraged to enter into contracts on behalf of their members for the collective sale of their sugar canes in terms of the provisions of the Cane Sale and Purchase Ordinance No. 47 of 1941. The increasing attention devoted in this direction has considerably eased the Committees in the discharge of their onerous duties relative to the supervision of the punctual repayment of loans and has enabled the Societies to maintain a definitely good standard of recovery.

In accordance with the terms of the previous report a great deal of time and effort was again expended during the year in an attempt to organise a Fishermen Society at Grand Gaube. Like their fellows at Mahebourg, the fisherfolk at Grand Gaube are prone to be suspicious of the stranger who is a townsman and are particularly so if he be in any way connected with a Government Department. The information collected shows that they are less heavily indebted than their fellows at Mahebourg and are superior to them in skill, enterprise and industry. Further inquiries have made it clear that there is possibly some hope of gaining their con-

dence with some unofficial help. Accordingly the Fisheries Advisory Committee, a body comprising non-officials as its members, is being consulted for the purpose of ascertaining whether the members can help by encouraging this new line of development.

A gratifying feature noticeable in the year's work lies in the marked increase in the share capital, the gradual expansion of the Societies, more active working and the maintenance of the good standard of recovery.

## Chapter VII: Social Services

### EDUCATION

There is provision in Mauritius for primary and secondary education and for the last ten years or so, on an average, 42,000 pupils attended the 186 educational institutions which are under the direct supervision of Government. Of these, 128 are primary schools and 8 secondary schools. More than half of the primary schools are under the management of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England and Indian Educational Authorities, and receive financial aid from Government. Primary education is free and the schools, both Government and Aided, are regularly inspected. The secondary schools vary in size and importance from the Royal College, with a post-school certificate course, to small private schools with a handful of pupils. Some of the larger schools, notably the Loretto Convents and a school of the Christian Brothers, are approved by the Education Department and are eligible for annual grants. Moderate fees are charged but there is a system of scholarships open to all pupils. All schools have to be registered and are open to inspection, but little has yet been done to supervise secondary education. Perhaps the most marked characteristic of Mauritius is its heterogeneous population. Its people consist of French, British, Creole, Indian and Chinese racial groups. Allegiances are racial, cultural and religious and the concept of a common Mauritian citizenship grows but slowly. One of the most pressing tasks of the schools is to develop the idea of citizenship and to provide conditions in which the seeds of racial co-operation can grow. With so many separate racial elements in so small an island the linguistic picture is variegated. The policy adopted is to teach all children first through the medium of their mother tongue which is, as a general rule, the Creole vernacular. French is substituted wherever possible and the use of English as a medium is being gradually introduced and steadily increased.

No accurate picture of the school system can be drawn without some reference to its recent history, and the following account may prove of interest.

In 1982 the officer responsible for the Primary Schools division of the Education Department called attention to the many serious defects in the local primary school system, and the question was subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for consideration. The main shortcoming of teaching in the primary schools was its atmosphere of bookishness and the over-emphasis on examinations which made "cramming" inevitable. The old fashioned classical curriculum with its academic bias, the absence of practical work of any kind and the concentration of all effort on the gaining of scholarships made the teaching in the primary schools unsuitable for the needs of a community that must be educated for life as well as for a living. Another defect of major importance which retarded progress was the absence of proper facilities for the training of teachers. New entrants for the teaching profession spent a year or two in the schools getting practical experience and then qualified as teachers by taking written examinations. There was therefore no study of the child as the central and most important object in the educational system and no knowledge of modern teaching techniques. The teaching, which was inevitably of poor quality, was conducted in the depressing atmosphere of school buildings which were, in most cases, entirely unsuitable and lacking in proper furniture and equipment. The best pupils qualified at examinations and the cleverest won scholarships but, generally speaking, the primary school in Mauritius failed to achieve its main purpose, the provision of education for all instead of instruction for a privileged few. Furthermore, primary and secondary education were considered as entirely independent and separate services and means were lacking for securing co-ordination in policy.

In 1989, preliminary steps were taken for a general survey of the educational system of the Colony and, on the advice of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, it was decided to create the post of Director of Education as an essential preliminary for any programme of reform. Mr. W. E. F. Ward, then on the staff of the Prince of Wales College, Achimota, Gold Coast, was selected to fill the new post. Soon after his arrival, new legislation was passed and special provision was introduced to make the Director of Education responsible for :

- (a) co-ordinating all the Colony's educational activities ;
- (b) providing a supply of trained teachers ;
- (c) securing improved health and physical training ;
- (d) developing agricultural and technical training ;
- (e) making the education of all classes of the community more practical ;

- (f) improving the teaching of English and assisting the spread of the English language in the Colony;
- (g) improving the education of girls.

With the new provisions, the two branches of the education services of the Island were merged into one and a properly constituted Education Department came into existence: the first step towards progress was thus achieved.

Within a year of his arrival, Mr. Ward submitted a comprehensive report on education in Mauritius and his recommendations were examined by a select committee of all the unofficial members of the legislature. After much discussion covering the whole field of education, the Director's recommendations were accepted and approved by the select committee with but few amendments.

In 1943 Mr. C. W. M. Cox, the Educational Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, visited the Colony to examine progress and the Government and members of the Council of Government had a further opportunity of obtaining expert advice and of discussing with him and the Director some of the more controversial issues which the development programme had exposed.

It is impossible to give the substance of the Ward recommendations in the compass of this report. His review covered the whole field of education in Mauritius and has already become what may be called the educational charter of the Colony. Some of the recommendations are already in operation and some progress can be measured.

The war naturally put a brake on development. New staff for implementing development schemes could not be appointed and some of the senior members of the existing staff were released for active service or seconded to special security employment within the Colony. But the war period, during which there was an inevitable suspension of active development was wisely used for the stock-taking and planning which underlie the Education Code of 1945.

First efforts were concentrated on the development of a Training College for primary school teachers. Owing to the war adequate staff was unobtainable and plans for building a residential institution had to be postponed. A good start was made however in temporary premises. The Government of Nigeria seconded, as Principal, one of its senior education officers and a nucleus of staff was gradually built up.

The first trained teachers from the College are now in the schools and a new spirit is abroad. Education is no longer confined to the classroom nor does it cease with the dismissal bell. Special courses have also been organised for serving teachers, most of whom have not had the opportunity of professional training, and the Training College will increasingly provide intensive courses in special subjects for these older teachers as staff and accommodation

increase. The new generation of teachers will undoubtedly be better fitted for their job than their predecessors who learnt in the hard and restricted school of experience. It is gratifying to find these teachers anxious to learn new methods and to give the young college-trained teachers their co-operation in the introduction of modern techniques and new ideas.

The question of conditions of service of primary school teachers has also received attention and improved salary scales were introduced in 1945. Conditions of service in aided schools were gradually improved and made to correspond as closely as possible with those in Government schools with a view to helping the educational authorities responsible for these schools to secure the services of a better type of teacher.

Following upon the introduction of new teaching methods primary school syllabuses were revised and the examination system reviewed. The Standard VI examination, which is in effect the primary school leaving certificate, has been standardised and the old practice of inspectors setting separate examinations for each school has been discontinued. The scholarship system also has been completely revised with a view to discovering ability and discouraging cramming.

Out-of-class activities have also developed to some extent and organised games, public health projects and school concerts are becoming more common, while during winter holidays an increasing number of scout camps can be seen around the coast. A mobile cinema tours the Island and films of education value are shown in the village hall or the school.

While education in Mauritius is still generally thought of in terms of classroom instruction, there are signs that the wider responsibilities of the school in broadening the cultural and social life of the community are being recognised. For a fuller recognition of this we look to the new generation of teachers.

During the war some school buildings were requisitioned by the military authorities. The position was made worse by the 1945 cyclones which destroyed many schools, with the result that at present some of the village schools are housed in unsuitable and inadequate buildings. A long-term school building programme has been prepared and it is hoped that a start will soon be made with at least six new schools.

A start was made on an experimental basis in providing children of seven schools with a cooked midday meal. The results are as yet inconclusive and requisite data incomplete, but it is clear that food shortages during the war aggravated the evil of malnutrition, which already existed when the war began. The experiment is being continued pending further investigation by the new Nutrition Officer.

One difficulty to be met in feeding school children has its origin in the admixture of races and creeds with varying diets and food



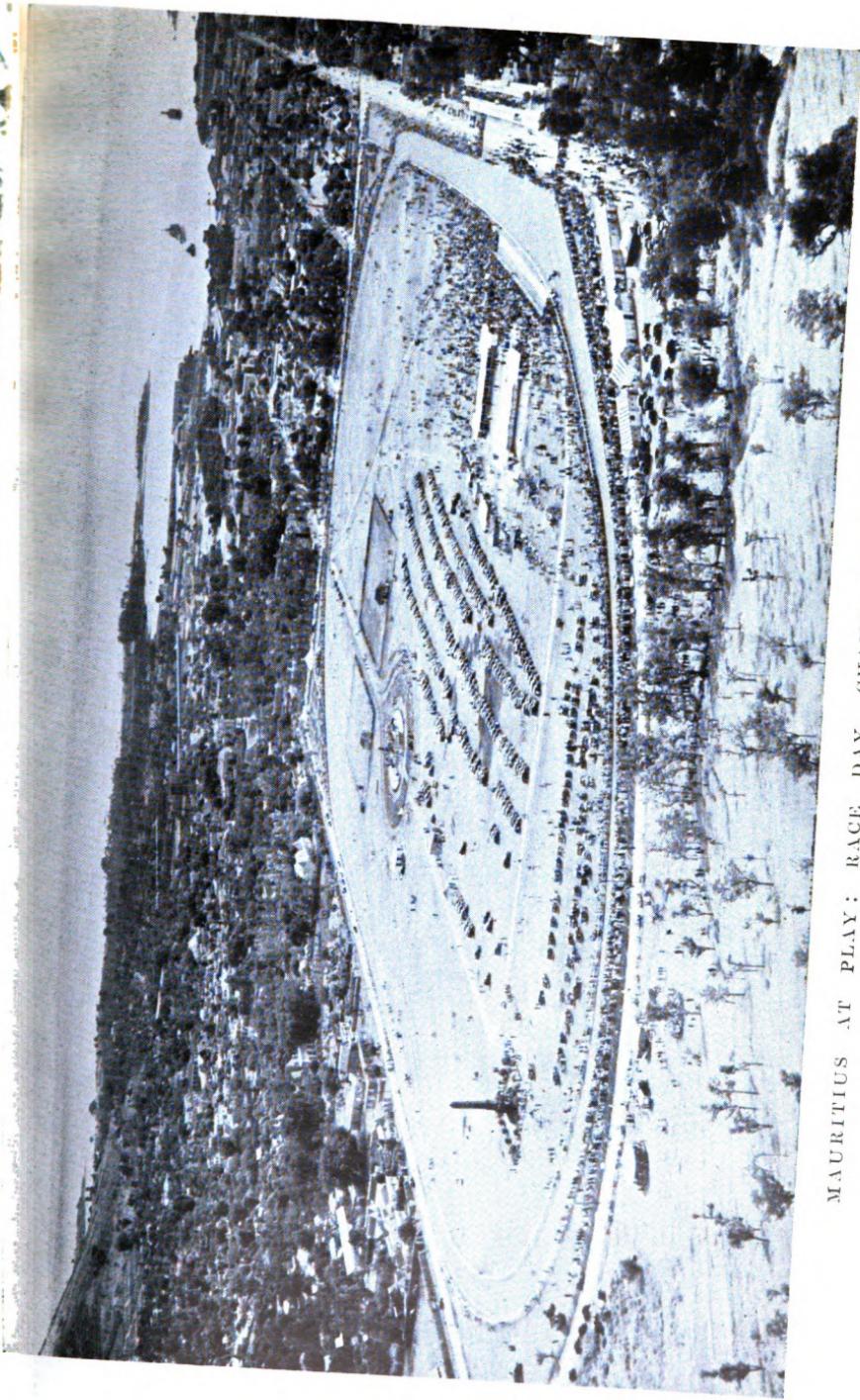
FRUIT STALL IN PORT LOUIS MARKET

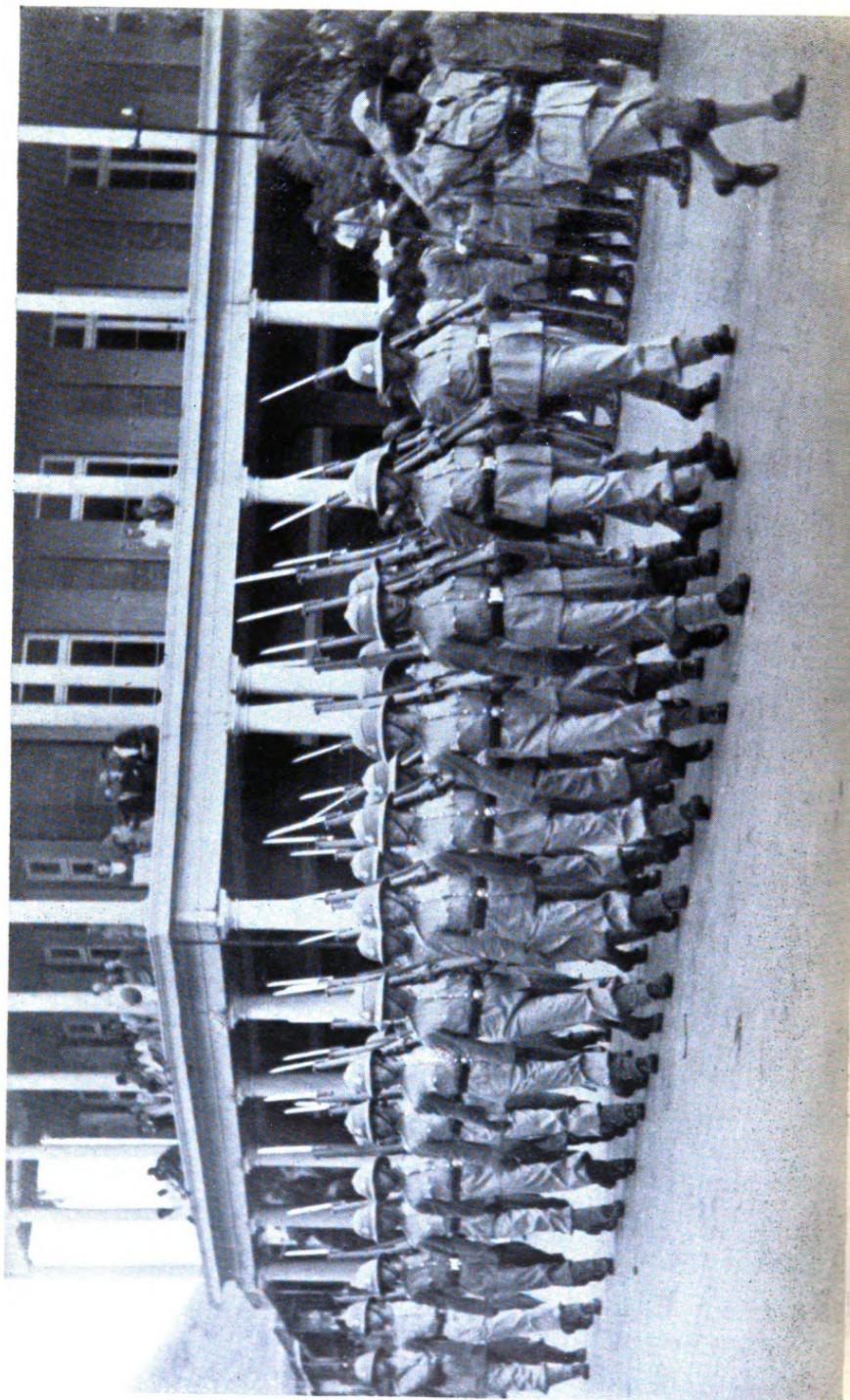
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MAURITIUS AT PLAY : RACE DAY, CHAMP DE MARS, PORT LOUIS





**habits.** Furthermore the school meal was, with the poorer parents, regarded as a substitute for a home meal rather than as an attempt to supplement an inadequate diet.

These have been years of patient building-up and of preparing the way for the more active development that it was hoped the post-war era would make possible. Perhaps the most important educational achievement has been the education of public opinion and the preparation of a soil in which new ideas could grow.

The new Director, Mr. Opper, arrived in March, 1946; soon after, the headquarters offices were moved from Beau Bassin to a more central site at Rose Hill and the Teachers' Training College expanded into the vacated premises at Beau Bassin. The most noteworthy feature of educational work in 1946 is the steady development of the Training College in spite of continued shortages of staff and unsuitable buildings. It is now a firmly established institution with a growing tradition and reputation and it is encouraging to note that the keenness and professional efficiency of its young products are beginning to be taken for granted throughout the Colony. A site for the new Training College was finally chosen after much consideration and some little controversy. The site is now bought and preliminary arrangements for building a residential college really worthy of the Island are in hand. The quality of new students improves yearly and the recent increase in their maintenance allowances ensures that no students likely to become good teachers are lost because they cannot support themselves during the period of training. A number of the new students are ex-servicemen and the Principal is well satisfied with their keenness, energy and attitude towards their work. The courses are for three and two years according to the type of training being taken. It is only a matter of time before the good start made in training these teachers will show itself in the primary schools. The emphasis throughout the training is on the place of the school and the teacher in the community and on the need for the teacher to set a lead in social welfare work.

The position as regards secondary school teachers is not so satisfactory. While the Training College regards their training as one of its main duties, little can be done until the college's staff is complete except in the provision of occasional short specialist courses. The provision of courses of professional training for their teachers is one of the most valuable services that can be rendered to the secondary schools; it is one that will be keenly appreciated. In fact, from primary and secondary teachers alike, the response made to humble efforts to provide short refresher and specialist courses has been most encouraging and is an index of the value that will derive from courses of training for serving teachers once there are the staff and the accommodation to make these developments possible.

The lack of senior staff referred to above has in fact over-

shadowed development throughout the department although the situation is gradually improving as newly appointed officers arrive from overseas. As a result of the recommendations of the Swindell Commission the salaries of primary school teachers were improved. It is a noteworthy fact that the basic initial salary of teachers has been substantially increased during the last three years. Both the aided and Government primary school teachers have their unions and a number of meetings have been held between the Director and representatives of the unions to discuss outstanding questions. On the whole these unions have conducted their affairs with prudence and moderation and they already have some results to show. New salary scales and altered conditions of service produce special problems of adjustment and also some grievances. With the help of the unions these are being gradually cleared away.

All members of the department, whether posted to the Royal College division, the Training College or the inspectorate, have now been designated Education Officers in three grades according to salary scales. There has been a tendency to regard the different divisions of the department as separate, and employment in one of them as implying permanent posting to that division. The common title of Education Officer emphasises the unity of the department and ensures the distribution of staff in the light of their suitability for the work to which they are posted. It also encourages members of the department to regard themselves as a team with common interests and ends.

In Mauritius the most valuable and most treasured scholastic prizes are the English Scholarships. These are the annual awards to the best scholars on the Classical and Science sides of the Royal College and enable these laureates, as they are called, to take at public expense a course of training up to five years at an educational institution overseas. But apart from being the lodestar of every pupil, the English Scholarship is also a Mauritian tradition hallowed by age and association. The decision to substitute the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination for the special English Scholarship Examination has represented a break with the past and has not been arrived at without considerable discussion and controversy at every level. However, at last an acceptable basis for the application of the Higher School Certificate has been reached and with its introduction two extra scholarships will be awarded annually for students of the aided boys' secondary schools and one for the girls' secondary schools. The advantage of the new system is that students who fail to win a scholarship nevertheless have an opportunity of obtaining a recognised educational qualification and also of gaining exemption from the London University Intermediate, B.A. or B.Sc., a real advantage to those who may be going overseas for further studies.

As stated elsewhere in this report, 1946 has seen the ripening

of plans made for the Colony's Development and Welfare Programme. The Education Department's share in the Ten Year Development Budget will be the building of the new Teacher's Training College and a programme of primary school buildings amounting to a sum of 3½ million rupees. On the threshold of large expenditure on new schools it has been necessary to re-examine our ideas on what constitute suitable school buildings, having regard to climatic conditions, appearance, expense and the human needs of those who are to teach and be taught within them. While fashions in design and materials change, following generations must not be burdened with schools that are functionally unsound or built without regard to decency or dignity.

The new primary schools will be built on plots of land adequate for the needs of the schools and providing for playing fields, school gardens and enough space for the homes of some members of the staff. At present very few schools have proper facilities for games. During 1946 an appeal by Government to the sugar estates has resulted in some schools being offered at nominal rents land for use as playing fields and school gardens. Since the land is not usually cleaned or levelled its preparation for school use costs money and takes time, although in most cases the scholars are doing their share of the work. One of the greatest social needs of Mauritius to-day is the provision of a football field in each village area where the young men can kick a ball about instead of frequenting the liquor shop or the gambling school.

Plans have been made for the building at Rose Hill of the first Domestic Science and Handwork Centre to serve schools of the Beau Bassin and Rose Hill area. Other centres will follow which will embody alterations suggested by experience at Rose Hill. The training to be given at these centres will be a useful corrective to the concentration on book learning.

A departmental library for Education Officers covering the wide field of education and sociology has been started. The British Council has continued to provide literature for schools and grants of books for secondary school libraries.

#### HEALTH

During the period 1940-46, the principal causes of morbidity have been, as usual :

- malaria;
- anaemia;
- diarrhoea and enteritis;
- diseases of the respiratory system.

"Injuries" and "abscesses" are also responsible for many admissions to hospital.

Malaria, anaemia and enteritis are the three main sources of ill health in Mauritius. When combined, they are often fatal.

If the inhabitants of Mauritius are to become strong and

healthy, these three enemies must be fought relentlessly, regardless of cost.

Against malaria (a) canalisation of streams, (b) drainage of swamps and (c) oiling have given excellent results.

This work is being carried out steadily and regularly; previous works being improved or completed and maintained.

D.D.T. and paludrine are new weapons which will soon be used on a large scale.

In a highly malarial district (Black River), over an area of 18 square miles, interiors of houses, huts and sheds have been sprayed with D.D.T. The experiment had been encouraging in that rooms were kept free of anophelines for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  months after spraying. Before spraying over 1,000 anophelines were periodically caught in these rooms. It is proposed to spray in a similar manner a much wider area, starting from the south-east corner of the island in order to follow the direction of the prevailing winds.

D.D.T. is however expensive and so is kerosene, which used as solvent. Spraying has to be done once every  $3\frac{1}{2}$  months and this together with labour, transport and supervision will involve a very considerable recurrent expenditure.

Paludrine, on the other hand, is not expensive and will be used on a large scale as soon as obtainable.

An experiment will, in the first place, be carried out at the Mental Hospital where 700 in-patients are closely supervised and easily controlled.

The combined action on malaria of (1) canalisation of streams and drainage of swamps, (2) oiling, (3) spraying with D.D.T. and (4) regular use of paludrine will be interesting to watch in the near future.

Anaemia of nutritional origin aggravating anaemia due to other causes such as ankylostomiasis has been increasing during the last five years.

The Hindu section of the population, being almost exclusively vegetarian, is the most affected.

The following figures will make the present situation clear:  
Cases of anaemia admitted to hospital in 1945 and 1946—

	Mahomedans	Christians	Hindus			
	Admissions	Deaths	Admissions	Deaths	Admissions	Deaths
1945	222	35	263	52	1249	186
1946	201	22	306	56	1456	174

No improvement in the situation can be foreseen until the staple diet of the population, namely rice, dholl, lentils and salt fish, is imported in sufficient quantities and sold cheaply.

Treatment of macrocytic anaemia is lengthy and expensive.

The ordinary patient leaves hospital as soon as he feels better and does not return until he is again in such a state that work is impossible and starvation imminent.

**Enteritis**

Sanitation in Mauritius is still primitive. Although in certain places a start has been made in tackling the problem, there still remains a very great deal to do.

Flies are a pest against which it is difficult to fight. Scattered over the island are small huts where cows are kept. Every small hut has its inevitable dung heap, an ideal breeding place for flies. Milk is carried in tin containers and diluted with sufficient water from any tap or stream to meet the demands of would-be purchasers.

A scheme is on foot for collecting milk from the farmer in a central depot. This milk will be pasteurised and finally sealed in sterile bottles ready for distribution or for keeping in cold storage. This measure in itself should go a long way towards supplying better food to infants and avoiding gross adulteration and pollution.

Education will have its beneficial effects in due course but it will take a long time to bring enteritis, typhoid, dysentery and other tropical diseases under control.

The incidence of typhoid in 1946 has been greater than in 1940-1945. There were 627 cases in the Island as compared with a yearly average of 298.

Inoculation has been encouraged : 21,367 persons voluntarily submitted to the two doses of T.A.B. in 1946. It is hoped to inoculate a greater number of volunteers next year.

The epidemic of poliomyelitis which started early in 1945, after the devastating effects of two cyclones, has been fully reported by Professor H. J. Seddon whose most valuable help the colony was lucky enough to secure.

Professor H. J. Seddon, Squadron Leader E. I. B. Hawes and Captain J. R. Raffray, R.A.M.C., published in *The Lancet* of the 16th November, 1946 (p. 707) a most interesting report on "The Poliomyelitis Epidemic in Mauritius".

This was supplemented in July, 1946, by another publication by A. M. McFarlan, G. W. A. Dick and H. J. Seddon on "The Epidemiology of the 1945 Outbreak of Poliomyelitis in Mauritius" which appeared in the *Quarterly Journal of Medicine—New Series XV No. 59* (Volume XXXIX of the continuous series).

The emergency Hospital which was opened for the special care and treatment of cases of poliomyelitis is still functioning.

Splints and orthopaedic appliances are made in His Majesty's Prisons.

The total number of cases of poliomyelitis notified during the epidemic was 1,116.

Of these 356 patients have been treated and cured;

462 still require treatment and are progressing satisfactorily ;

82 are unsatisfactory, their parents either being careless or refusing to allow hospital treatment; 60 require institutional treatment at a school for physical defectives; 58 cases have never been seen by the Orthopaedic Surgeon; 16 have left Mauritius; 82 have died.

These figures became available at the end of 1946.

A whole-time Dental Surgeon was appointed in 1946 and is doing good work amongst school children of the poorer classes.

A dental clinic adjoining one of the general hospitals will be built on modern lines.

Provision has been made for two travelling dispensaries which will enable distant and isolated villages to be regularly visited by a medical man who will see patients and give appropriate treatment.

#### HOUSING

(i) Out of some 88,000 buildings in Mauritius, 83,000 are thatched and 21,000 partially thatched. The term "thatched" in this island being applied to low, dark, airless and generally unhygienic constructions, it is evident that some 54,000 houses (61 per cent) are decidedly bad.

(ii) The need to improve housing conditions and slum clearance in the towns, villages and estate camps has for many years been appreciated by the Government.

(iii) Mr. P. M. Aldred, B.Sc. (Eng.), A.M.T. & P.I., town-planning officer to the Government of Rhodesia, visited the Colony and submitted his report in 1946.

(iv) The Building and Housing Advisory Board was formed in 1946 to study the best means of removing slums and of building new houses, particularly for the poorer classes, and of enforcing sanitary laws. A sum of Rs 12,000 to improve estate housing has been included in the Development and Welfare Scheme and is awaiting the approval of the Secretary of State.

(v) Professor Thornton-White, F.R.I.B.A., visited the Colony in January-February, 1947, to advise on town planning and slum clearance.

#### SOCIAL WELFARE

Mauritius is an old colony with more than two centuries of civilization and more than half of that period under British rule. Social welfare has developed in the Colony with the growth of the customary colonial government services and the pioneer activities of unofficial societies.

Social welfare, in the more technical sense ascribed to the term nowadays, refers to a group of activities which do not exactly fall within the scope of ordinary State services and which cannot

entirely be left to the initiative of amateur social workers. For example the Scout and Guide movements are well established in Mauritius but no youth organisation has yet been sponsored by public or local administration as it is now done in Britain.

In Mauritius, there is a growing recognition that specialised social workers, specially trained for the purpose, are now needed to cope with modern social problems. In accordance with that principle, carefully chosen Mauritian civil servants have been sent to England to study social science and to undergo adequate training. A small team of such specialists, attached to various government departments, is now working towards the advancement of social welfare in the more technical sense. This new development is still in the experimental stage and is more fully described below.

Excluding the local administration of one municipality and three townships the public administration of the Colony has hitherto been too centralized. This deficiency has been met by the appointment of two Civil Commissioners who will supervise the general administration of rural districts. They will also control the activities of social welfare workers in the same way as such activities are controlled by local authorities in Britain.

### *Promotion of Community Life*

In general, communal organisation is difficult in a colony having a mixed population whose traditional rules and customs have been influenced by European contact and education. The difficulty is more acute in urban areas where people are inclined to be more sophisticated. Recent attempts made to foster communal co-operation in rural districts have given some encouraging results. Village committees recently organised have shewn that much can be done towards the well-being of rural communities through self-help. These village committees have no legal status yet as the whole system must be thoroughly tested by actual practice. Village organisations are given the opportunity of assuming in a progressive way the obligations of local authorities, especially with regard to sanitation. Legislation (under consideration) giving required powers at different stages of advancement will be based on results achieved.

### *The Relief of the Destitute and Disabled*

The relief of the destitute and disabled is administered by the Poor Law which is based on an Ordinance of 1902. Poor Law is a branch of the Labour Department. For purposes of administration the country is divided into 23 areas each under the charge of a Visiting Officer. Three Poor Law Officers who have a larger division under their control, supervise the work of the Visiting Officers. Until the end of 1945, applications for relief were in the first place referred to the Visiting Officers for enquiry and a report

was made to the Poor Law Officer who submitted a recommendation to Head Office, where the grant, nature and scale of relief was decided by a senior officer of the Department.

The amount of relief granted during the war years has been on the average half a million rupees per year. At the end of 1944, about eight thousand persons of both sexes were receiving Poor Law grants. The cost of relief since 1936 has been on the rise. Though there was more money flowing into the Colony during the war and there was no lack of work, the burden on the Poor Law was not proportionately lessened. This is explained not only by the rise in the cost of living but also by the fact that in addition to the primary causes of poverty such as old age, ill health, death of chief wage earners, insufficiency of earnings, there were also secondary causes which were not affected by the operation of economic forces, but were rather the product of social factors. Of these, the most important were the disruption of family life, the impact of modern influences upon the life of certain classes of people which completely changed their customs and habits and the migration of large groups from the villages to the towns. It is a marked feature of the Poor Law that in recent years poverty has tended to grow at a greater pace in the urban areas, where more medical facilities are available, than in the rural districts.

There has also been no sensible fall in the admission to Poor Houses. Though the Christian institutions, which are under the management of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches receive inmates of any religion, Moslems and Hindus have, where possible, usually preferred to go to the Infirmaries and Convents which were run by their own communities. There is still, nevertheless, an appreciable number of Indians in the Poor Houses under Christian management. In 1941, Government established a non-denominational institution as an experiment, but owing to shortage of supervisory staff it had to be closed in 1946. The Poor Law institutions are obviously in need of some reform, but it must be said that they are run with a selfless zeal and in a true spirit of community service. The other institutions, such as the Society de Saint Vincent de Paul, the Maternity and Child Welfare, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Austin Wilson Home, the Oeuvre Pasteur de la Goutte de Lait, the Oeuvre du Diner des Pauvres and the Oeuvre des Malades, which administer to the needs of the poor, are continuing their charitable work with undiminished devotion.

Another of the activities of the Poor Law is to undertake emergency relief measures during cyclones. During the cyclones of 1945 which almost paralysed the life of the Colony this Department played its part in rehabilitation work. All the staff were on duty while the cyclones were active, and after they were over members of the staff co-operated with the other services in the opening of roads and services, collected the injured and brought

them to hospitals and places of safety, directed the homeless to the refugee centres, and bought the food and other urgent necessities of life which the victims needed. After dealing with the urgencies of the hour, they had to tackle the problems of the aftermath. Applications were made for free supply of wood and timber and this demanded careful enquiry into thousands of cases. They were flooded with applications for cash assistance and action had to be taken promptly to avoid suffering. Poor Law had also to deal with problems of resettlement. When the labour forces which were recruited for the Mauritius Labour Force were demobilised in 1945, this Department organised relief work which gave employment to these men for several months.

In February, 1946, an officer of the Labour Department, who had just returned after taking a two year course in Social Science at the London School of Economics, was appointed Poor Law Supervisor. Shortly after he had assumed office, he recommended a thorough re-organisation of the Poor Law on the ground that it was out of line with modern practice. The changes on the administrative level were put into operation immediately. The first step was to give effect to the recommendation of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances which occurred in the North of Mauritius in 1943, to separate Labour from Poor Law, so that the latter might function as an independent service. For administrative convenience the Labour Commissioner continued to act as head of the Poor Law.

Poor Law administration in the past suffered a great deal from over-centralisation. It took a long time to dispose of applications for relief. In order to ensure a speedier handling of the cases, Poor Law local boards, known as Friends of the Poor, were appointed in the various areas of the Colony. The Poor Law officers were relieved of their duties as supervising officers and were transferred to Head Office to perform special work under the direction of the Poor Law Supervisor. Visiting Officers were left in charge of their areas and were to submit their reports to a Poor Law Committee before forwarding their reports to Head Office. These committees, which have acquired legal status, were drawn from the different classes of the community. The local priest, the school master and the village elders were generally chosen to form the board. Though it is yet too early to predict the certain success of these institutions, it is already evident that the members are doing the work with great enthusiasm. They meet weekly or fortnightly and the president keeps in close touch with the Head Office. As they gain experience, they begin to realise that the privilege of advising the State on matters of social welfare also carries responsibilities. Some of the boards meet on Sundays. Urgent cases which require immediate assistance are dealt with promptly. The Visiting Officers give a note to the applicants and the money is paid by the Post Office. Settlement of accounts

between the two Departments is done once a month. Formerly casuals were paid only once a week when the Poor Law Office called at the office of the Visiting Officer.

The chief aim of the reform is to enlist the co-operation of private persons in the work of rehabilitation which is now the main object of the Poor Law. More members have been added to the Visiting Committee to Poor Houses and visits to these institutions are now made at more regular intervals. During the New Year holidays a Charity Week was organised for the benefit of inmates and, to meet the expenditure of the festivals and entertainment that were given in the Poor Houses, subscriptions were liberally made. A lady Visiting Officer has been appointed to look after the welfare of the inmates and in her visits she is often accompanied by other ladies who offer their help voluntarily. Cinema shows are given at intervals in all the Poor Law institutions.

The fresh approach which is now being made to the problem of poverty requires a specialised staff and the Poor Law Supervisor has started at the Royal College a social welfare course in order to train the personnel of the Poor Law. Members of the Education Department also attend the lectures. The course, which is to last two years, comprises the following subjects :

- Social Welfare and Education
- Social Anthropology
- Social Psychology
- Social Medicine
- Public Health and Nutrition
- Social Administration
- Biology.

The panel of lecturers who have given their services free include the Director of Education, the Labour Commissioner, the Poor Law Supervisor, the Superintendent of Prisons, two medical men, two Education Officers and two Social Welfare Officers. Poor Law Officers, and for that matter the school teachers, have little or no knowledge of modern methods of social welfare and it is hoped that after the training is over their minds will have been awoken both to the real needs and to the practical cure of excessive poverty.

A school for the blind has been established in the yard of the Poor Law Department. With the help of the Poor Law, which makes the appropriate monetary grants, the work of rehabilitation is undertaken by a committee which has been appointed by Government. A third of those who are at the school are recipients of Poor Law relief. It is hoped that many more destitutes who are blind will be rehabilitated by this school. It is proposed to send a Mauritian blind person to London to be trained as instructor.

In order to follow up individual cases, a Central Registry has been established at Head Office. A short history of every recipient

of Poor Law relief is kept on record and the names of the recipients are registered in the Central Registry. This is done so that the

Poor relief is recorded in a card index and it is now possible to obtain at a glance a general outline of poor relief in Mauritius. The system of keeping Poor Law accounts has, moreover, been brought into line with orthodox methods of accountancy.

Another way of rehabilitating the unemployed, who have been a charge on the Poor Law, has been to find them work in private undertakings. In the early months of 1946, Rs 4,000 were spent every month on relief work which from the point of view of output was considerably lower than that of the average labourer employed in the sugar industry. Employment for the relief workers was found on a sugar estate, and the wages earned by them were considerably higher than the grants they were receiving from the Poor Law. Every effort was made to induce the able-bodied to accept the work available and the practice of placing unemployed, both of the clerical and the labour type, is being continued. The form of the Poor Law is designed to rehabilitate the poor and institute and to achieve this purpose scientific methods of approach have been introduced.

**Juvenile Delinquency**

The available statistics for the years 1939 to 1946 show that there are about 400 cases coming before the Juvenile Courts each year and that a sudden increase in this figure occurred in 1943 when the registration of manpower was in force and a number of boys were fined for failing to observe the regulations.

Of these 400 cases about one in every ten is of juvenile pregnancy and approximately the same number for "wounds and blows"; four out of every ten are for larceny, embezzlement and house breaking; two out of ten for praedial larceny or plundering growing crops; the remaining two out of ten for miscellaneous contraventions, such as bicycle offences, fishing in reserves, forestry and market offences, are mostly dealt with by fines. A very small fraction, less than 2 per cent of the total, are charged with offences of a sexual nature.

Of these cases 2 out of every 10 are either discharged, given the benefit of doubt or dismissed with a caution; 4 out of every 10 are fined; 8 out of every 10 are birched; and 1 out of every 10 is sent to the Industrial School. Nearly two-thirds of the sentences to the Industrial School are for periods of less than 18 months.

Such figures as are available show a wide difference in the treatment accorded by Magistrates, some of whom favour the use of the birch, and others cautions and fines. Records are too unreliable to show which of the two schools of thought has produced the better results, but there appear to be more cases of boys being twice birched by the Court than twice cautioned.

The Corporal Punishment Amendment Ordinance No. 62 of 1945 provides that a Medical Officer must be present when the birch is administered.

The Industrial School passed to the control of the Superintendent of Prisons from the Commissioner of Police in September 1945.

The Industrial School includes a Remand Home and a place of detention for boys ordered to be detained for short periods ranging from 8 days to 18 months.

In the last 18 months increasing importance has been placed upon the need for thoroughly investigating each case, and the Magistrates are now being supplied with the results of the enquiry into the home affairs of each boy and a recommendation as to the treatment by the Superintendent of Prisons in the case of each boy placed on remand.

It is hoped that the Probation of Offenders Ordinance will materially reduce the number of boys ordered short and even long sentences in the Industrial School and to some extent reduce the fines. The Extra Mural Employment Bill will also be applicable to boys of working age who are still eligible for trial before the Juvenile Courts.

A curious feature of juvenile delinquency in Mauritius is that the number of youths between the ages of 17 and 20 who are sent to prison exceeds the total number of those who are dealt with by the Juvenile Courts. This can only be accounted for by the slow mental development of the youths that renders them submissive to their parents and willing to accept small wages. At about the age of 17 these youths frequently marry or live in concubinage. Thus the sudden development to full manhood responsibilities from comparative childhood is passed through in an extremely short period that coincides with the youngest age at which youths start to expect an increase of wages or leave "blind alley" employment.

The alarmingly high proportion of ex-Industrial School Boys who find their way to prison is also accounted for in this way: partly because they are probably the worst of the juvenile offenders and partly because they invariably return to those same homes where they started on their life of crime. It is hoped the system of after-care that is being started will have some effect on this situation. It is estimated that more than half the total number of boys who have been in the Industrial School are later sentenced to prison and that more than two thirds of those sent there for juvenile vagrancy appear in prison. These facts again emphasise the need for after-care treatment.

During the period under review all the juvenile cases were heard by a Magistrate at Rose Hill sitting on a separate Juvenile Court for the whole Island, but in June, 1944, this practice was discontinued and juvenile cases are now heard by the District Magistrates in Chambers, either before or after a Session of the Adult Court.

The Probation Officer has, since his appointment, been working for the Court of Rose Hill and has conducted many enquiries at

the request of the Magistrate. Other Magistrates are also asking for this assistance in dealing with juvenile cases and the results of the co-operation are most encouraging.

Public interest has also been encouraged in the Industrial School and the visit of outside football teams is becoming a feature of the boys' life. The local Cinema Manager has assisted greatly in giving the boys a Christmas treat in the form of a cinema show.

## Chapter VIII: Legislation

Seventy-six Ordinances were passed by the Council of Government and assented to by the Governor during the year 1946.

The majority of these Ordinances deal with matters of domestic concern of which the following are the more important :

### LAW AND ORDER

**The Penal Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946.** (Ordinance No. 17 of 1946).

This Ordinance removes from the statute book a provision which was out of date, namely Article 210 of the Penal Code which restricted the free formation of political or religious association and of literary or other societies.

**The Criminal Appeal (Poor Persons) Ordinance, 1946.** (Ordinance No. 19 of 1946).

Under the law of the Colony, any person convicted and sentenced to imprisonment or to pay a fine of Rs 50 or more by a District Court may appeal against such conviction and sentence to the Supreme Court. In practice, the right of appeal could only be exercised by persons who could afford the necessary expenses and the above Ordinance was passed to ensure that, in deserving cases, poor persons will be given the necessary facilities to appeal to the Supreme Court from conviction by the Lower Courts.

**The Road Traffic (Amendment No. 2) Ordinance, 1946,** (Ordinance No. 44 of 1946), amending the Road Traffic Ordinance, 1939.

The Road Traffic Ordinance, 1939, (No. 71 of 1939) provides for the complete control of road traffic and transport facilities throughout the Colony and the conditions under which public conveyance may be effected.

Ordinance No. 44 of 1946 amends that Ordinance as a result of experience acquired during the seven years which have elapsed since it was enacted.

The main objects of the amendments are :

- (1) to render more effective the Police control over the use of unlicensed motor vehicles;
- (2) to confer upon the Commissioner of Police power to refuse the grant or renewal of a driving licence to a person who, by his conduct, has shown himself to be unfit to be the holder of a licence;
- (3) to exempt from licence duty under certain conditions motor vehicles used solely for agricultural purposes; and
- (4) to effect a reduction in the categories of licences for public service vehicles and ensure that public service vehicles shall, in order to qualify for a licence, satisfy the prescribed requirements as to fitness and insurance.

The Liquor (Amendment No. 2) Ordinance, 1946, (Ordinance No. 57 of 1946) amending the Liquor Ordinance, 1939. (Ordinance No. 40 of 1939).

This measure is one of the initial steps taken by the Government towards the gradual reduction of alcoholism in the Colony. It provides for the better control of, and greater restriction over the sale of, rum. Powers have been taken to limit the quantity of rum which may be sold in any year and the number of licences which may be issued for the sale of rum.

The Probation of Offenders Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 58 of 1946).

By this ordinance the system of probation has been introduced as part of the penal administration of the Colony. It empowers the Courts, by making probation orders, to place offenders under the supervision of probation officers instead of sentencing them to a penalty. Probation orders may be made for a period of not less than one year and not more than three years and the Court may impose conditions as to residence and other matters considered necessary for securing the good conduct of the offenders; those conditions may be varied by the Court. Provision is also made for the appointment of suitable probation officers, and for the procedure to be followed in the event of a probationer failing to comply with any of the provisions of his probation order or being convicted for some offence while the probation order is still in force.

The Unofficial Uniforms Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 59 of 1946).

This enactment empowers the Governor to prohibit the wearing or display of certain distinctive dresses, apparel or emblems and is designed to prevent disturbances of the public peace.

The Court Fees Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 60 of 1946).

The laws and rules relating to costs of proceedings before the Courts of the Colony were numerous and out of date. This measure

implements the recommendations of a committee appointed in 1944 under the chairmanship of the Chief Justice of the Colony : it groups under one ordinance the various enactments relating to law costs and at the same time revises the scales of the costs.

The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946, (Ordinance No. 64 of 1946) amending the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, 1934 (Ordinance No. 5 of 1934).

The difficulties experienced by Police officers when raiding suspected opium dens owing to the premises being bolted and equipped with all sorts of contrivances, and having to be forced open, thereby allowing ample time for the destruction of incriminating evidence, led to the passing of this ordinance.

The ordinance provides that in certain circumstances which are set out in its provisions it will be presumed that premises are used as opium dens and that the occupiers have sanctioned their use as such.

The Public Meetings and Processions Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 65 of 1946).

This ordinance was enacted for the purpose of replacing Ordinance No. 9 of 1945. That ordinance removed from the Statute Book certain restrictive provisions which were set out in its repeal section. The ordinance under report further relaxes the restrictions upon the holding of public meetings and public processions. It was drafted in the light of certain suggestions made by the Secretary of State who approved its introduction into the Council of Government.

No special authorisation is now required for the holding of a public meeting or procession, but the organisers must previously notify the Police of their intention to hold it.

The Governor is given power to prohibit any public meeting or procession which, in his opinion, would be likely to cause a disturbance of public order or to promote disaffection.

The Commissioner of Police, too, is empowered to impose conditions for the preservation of public order on the occasion of certain processions and, in certain cases, with the consent of the Governor, to prohibit for a limited period the holding of public processions generally, or of classes of public processions.

#### FINANCE

The Graduated Poll Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 69 of 1946).

This ordinance, which is based on the United Kingdom Income Tax Act, 1945, makes important changes with respect to the liability to tax under the Graduated Poll Tax Ordinance, 1939. (Ordinance No. 86 of 1939).

It provides for the grant of an initial allowance in respect of expenditure on new industrial buildings and new machinery or

plant and introduces the principle of making annual allowance for depreciation or wear and tear.

#### AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

The Tobacco Production and Marketing (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946 (Ordinance No. 6 of 1946), amending the Tobacco Production and Marketing Ordinance, 1943.

The production and sale of leaf tobacco in the Colony is regulated by the Tobacco Production and Marketing Ordinance, 1943, (Ordinance No. 18 of 1943), and control is vested in a Tobacco Board constituted under the Ordinance and presided over by the Director of Agriculture.

Ordinance No. 6 of 1946 makes certain minor amendments to the principal ordinance in the light of experience gained, and gives additional powers to the Tobacco Board for the establishment of research stations and laboratories.

The Cyclone and Drought Insurance Fund Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 58 of 1946).

The staple crop of the Colony, sugarcane, has, from time to time, been severely affected by drought and by cyclones. The above ordinance introduces a scheme of compulsory insurance against these calamities and establishes a Fund (to be administered by a board) from which compensation in respect of cyclone or drought damage will be paid.

Subject to certain deductions for which provision is made in the ordinance, estates with factories, millers and planters will contribute to the Fund an annual premium of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the value of the average quantity of sugar which accrued to them during the preceding three normal years of production. The annual premium may be reduced by the Governor, after consultation with the board, if the assets of the Fund are at any time in excess of the amount which is considered necessary for the payment of compensation.

In accordance with rules which are set out in the schedule to the ordinance, payments will be made by the board to estates with factories, millers and planters for cyclone or drought damage suffered by them in any year. The ordinance also provides for the making of advances to the Fund from the general revenue of the Colony in case the Fund is temporarily unable to meet its liabilities, and for the inspection of plantations to ensure that they are not neglected after the occurrence of a cyclone or drought.

#### HEALTH AND SANITATION

The Prevention of Yellow Fever Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 22 of 1946).

There is a danger of yellow fever being introduced into the Colony, as yet free from that disease, by ships or aircraft coming from an infected port. This Ordinance accordingly provides for

The compulsory inoculation of all classes of persons having to transact business on board ships or aircraft, and prohibits any person from boarding a ship or aircraft coming from an infected port unless he is in possession of a valid certificate of inoculation.

**The Prevention of Malaria Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 28 of 1946).**

This ordinance enables measures to be taken for the prevention of malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases which are prevalent in the Colony. It provides for the establishment of an advisory board whose functions will be to advise Government generally on measures to be taken to bring malaria under control and to ensure the co-ordination and the co-operation of Government departments, local authorities, land owners and the public in general.

Executive powers are conferred upon the Director of the Medical and Health Department, who is the ex-officio chairman of the advisory board, regarding the measures to be taken with a view to preventing or combating outbreaks of malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases.

**The River Reserves (Control of Vegetation) Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 29 of 1946).**

This ordinance is related to the Prevention of Malaria Ordinance, 1946, mentioned in the preceding paragraph, and is one of the legislative measures designed to combat the existence, persistence and propagation of malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases in the Colony.

Under the ordinance, riparian owners in special areas are compelled to reconstitute the riparian belts of vegetation growing on their stream banks by clearing them of weeds and other useless vegetation and planting thereon approved species of trees.

**The Crown Lands (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 30 of 1946).**

This ordinance, which is connected with Ordinances Nos. 28 and 29 of 1946, amends and implements the existing laws governing the protection of trees growing on Crown Lands and in mountain and river reserves.

#### LABOUR

**The Apprenticeship Ordinance, 1946. (Ordinance No. 18 of 1946).**

This ordinance was introduced with the object of putting an end in the Colony to the prevalent practice of excessive apprenticeship. Young people were employed at low wages with promises for the future, but, since the number of apprentices were in excess of the actual demand, only the best could eventually find work.

The ordinance regulates the conditions of apprenticeship, provides for the establishment of apprenticeship committees, for the declaration of designated trades, for the powers of the Labour-

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Commissioner in connection with such trades, and, generally, aims at ensuring that, on the completion of their period of apprenticeship, apprentices shall have reasonable prospects of employment.

The Industrial Associations (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946, (Ordinance No. 37 of 1946), amending the Industrial Associations Ordinance, 1938, (Ordinance No. 7 of 1938).

This ordinance introduces certain changes with respect to arbitration procedure in labour disputes. Hitherto the Court of Arbitration consisted of a Judge of the Supreme Court of the Colony, assisted by two assessors, but the procedure to be followed before the Court was not provided for.

The main features introduced by the ordinance are the following :

- (a) The President of the Court will be a person appointed by the Governor, not necessarily a Judge of the Supreme Court, and provision is made for the making of the award with all practicable dispatch ;
- (b) whereas the power to refer an industrial dispute to compulsory arbitration remains, as before, vested in the Governor in Executive Council, the Labour Commissioner is given power to refer a dispute to the Court, if both parties to the dispute consent ;
- (c) no strike or lock out may lawfully take place in respect of industrial disputes which are under reference to the Court.

The ordinance also introduces " joint committees ", in addition to " conciliation boards " as part of conciliation machinery.

The Factories Ordinance, 1946, (Ordinance No. 42 of 1946).

The object of this Ordinance is to provide for the registration and supervision of factories and for the more effective protection of workers against accidents.

Under the ordinance every existing or new factory must be registered with the Labour Commissioner, who may refuse to issue the certificate of registration if in his opinion the factory cannot be operated without imminent risk of bodily injury or has not been erected in accordance with the terms of the permit authorising its construction. Power is given to the Governor in Executive Council to make regulations for the purpose of ensuring the health and safety of workers employed in factories.

**THE EMERGENCY LAWS (TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS) ORDINANCE, 1946**

The Emergency Laws (Transitional Provisions) Ordinance, 1946, (Ordinance No. 4 of 1946).

This ordinance maintains in force for a limited period (until the 31st December, 1947) certain Defence regulations which were enacted during the war and which would otherwise have expired.

**LEGISLATION**

On the 24th February, 1946 (the date of expiry of the United Kingdom Emergency Powers (Defence) Acts, 1939-1945).

The Defence regulations thus maintained in force relate to supplies and other matters of a purely local character and were considered to be outside the scope of the Imperial legislation which empowers the Governor by Order to direct that certain Defence regulations shall be retained.

**The Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Fund Incorporation Ordinance, 1946.** (Ordinance No. 9 of 1946).

In May, 1942, a committee was appointed to render assistance to ex-servicemen after their demobilisation and pending their resettlement in civil life, and, from time to time, funds were contributed by means of the public and from other sources for the expenses and management of the committee and the carrying of its objects into effect.

This ordinance was passed with a view to giving a legal status to the committee and empowering it to hold and possess property and to carry on its activities in its corporate capacity.

**The Military Units Ordinance, 1946.** (Ordinance No. 23 of 1946).

This ordinance was passed for the purpose of giving legal sanction to the voluntary enlistment of recruits for service in garrison and other units in and outside the Colony.

It provides, *inter alia*, for the enlistment of recruits, the establishment of units and their duties and functions, their control by the Army Council and the application to them of the Army Act, the making of regulations relating to their pay and allowances, and the disbandment of units.

**The Mauritius Lotteries Ordinance, 1946.** (Ordinance No. 46 of 1946).

At the beginning of the war, an ordinance was passed, (The Lotteries (His Majesty's Forces) Ordinance, 1939), authorising the promoting and conduct of lotteries in aid of His Majesty's Forces,

With the end of hostilities, it was necessary that that ordinance should be repealed and re-enacted in the form of the present ordinance. It enables Government to raise funds in time of peace for His Majesty's Forces and also provides for the application of part of the proceeds of the lotteries to the welfare, assistance and entertainment of personnel of the Merchant Navies of the United Kingdom, British possessions and friendly powers.

**The Sweepstakes (Control) Ordinance, 1946.** (Ordinance No. 51 of 1946).

Lotteries are prohibited in the Colony, but under a few enactments a number of incorporated societies are permitted to promote and conduct lotteries in connection with horse racing and regattas.

This ordinance was passed to provide for the control of these sweepstakes. It provides for the limiting of the number of

lotteries which may be promoted by any such society in any year and for the filing of a duly audited yearly statement of account and balance sheet. Further, the Governor in Executive Council is empowered, in case of dishonesty, to prohibit a society from promoting further lotteries.

The Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946 (Ordinance No. 66 of 1946), amending the Co-operative Societies Ordinance, 1945, (Ordinance No. 51 of 1945).

Certain amendments are effected by this ordinance to Ordinance No. 51 of 1945 which regulates co-operative societies of all kinds.

Those amendments, *inter alia*, authorise a co-operative society to receive deposits from or for the benefit of minors and to pay interest thereon, to accept as members persons having attained the age of 18 years, add to the powers of liquidators and deal with certain matters consequent upon the liquidation of a society, and provide for appeals from the decision of the Registrar in certain cases and for the submission of questions of law to the Supreme Court by way of case stated.

The Inscription of Privileges and Mortgages Ordinance, 1946 (Ordinance No. 73 of 1946).

This measure was passed with the object of reforming and simplifying the existing procedure relating to the enrolment in the Mortgage Office of privileges and mortgages. Hitherto the title deed giving rise to the privilege or mortgage was filed with the Conservator of Mortgages, together with two memoranda of inscription setting out certain particulars required by law and the contents of those memoranda were copied verbatim in a register of inscriptions. This superfluous formality, entailing loss of time, has been done away with. The register of inscriptions is abolished : under the new procedure the memoranda of inscription retained in the Mortgage office will be bound together and will replace the suppressed register.

The Inscription and Mortgage (Amendment) Ordinance, 1946, (Ordinance No. 74 of 1946), amending Ordinance No. 36 of 1868.

This ordinance is akin to Ordinance No. 74 of 1946 and simplifies in like manner the law and procedure relating to the transcription of deeds and judgments.

The Tobacco Board Employees' Pension Fund Ordinance, (Ordinance No. 76 of 1946).

This ordinance was passed to provide for the granting of pensions to employees of the Tobacco Board constituted under Ordinance No. 13 of 1943. It makes provision for the formation of a Pension Fund, for contributions thereto, for the keeping and auditing of accounts, for periodical actuarial investigation, and for the conditions under which pension is payable.

## Chapter IX: Law and Order

### JUSTICE

The Laws of Mauritius are mainly based on the French "Code Napoleon"; the Civil Code, the Penal Code, the Code of Commerce and the Code of Civil Procedure, with some amendments to suit local conditions, are still in force in the island.

The Local (a) Bankruptcy Law (b) Law of Evidence (c) Law of Civil Procedure are however mostly English as well as the whole system of Labour Law recently introduced into the Colony.

The highest judicial authority is the Supreme Court of Judicature presided over by the Chief Justice, assisted by two Puisne Judges.

The Executive Officer of that Court is the Master and Registrar who is at the same time the Judge of the Bankruptcy Division of the Court.

The Supreme Court is a Superior Court of Record and has the same powers, authority and jurisdiction as His Majesty's Court of King's Bench in England.

The Supreme Court is also a Court of Equity and has Admiralty jurisdiction. It also possesses an appellate jurisdiction over the judgments of all the other Courts of the Colony and those of the Supreme Court of the Colony of Seychelles.

Appeals may be made to the Privy Council against judgments of the Supreme Court.

The District Magistrates of the Colony try the less important Civil and Criminal Cases whether sitting as a Bench (three Magistrates together) or alone.

There is also an Industrial Court which has jurisdiction in all labour disputes, including workmen's compensation and matters arising out of factory legislation.

A Resident District Magistrate administers justice in the dependency of Rodrigues and a visiting Magistrate inspects once annually each of the Lesser Dependencies.

Since 1945, the Magistracy, which was formerly under the administrative control of the Procureur General, has passed under the control of the Chief Justice.

The activities of the Courts were not greatly affected by the war. One Prize Court case affecting a French steamer under Vichy Government control and one case of a young man with dual nationality (English and French) who objected to being enlisted in the local Forces were determined in 1941 by the Supreme Court. Cases under the local profiteering regulations were numerous.

The war years have shown a noticeable increase in Divorce cases and a very great reduction in Bankruptcy cases.

## POLICE

*Organisation*

Like all Colonial Police Forces, the Mauritius Police Force, starting its career after 1810 when the Island was occupied by Great Britain, was organised more on military than on civil lines. With the Englishman's ability to compromise, it was agreed that there should be two Commissioners of Police, one English and one French. The dual control lasted until 1818, since when the Force has been commanded by a British Officer and its military characteristics have been almost completely removed.

However, the French influence has remained, and while all officers and men speak English, many fluently, and all records are kept in English, a patois French known as Creole is the *lingua franca* of all local ranks when speaking to each other.

The Police Force is a typical cross section of the population of the island: the three communities—Indo-Mauritian, Coloured and White—comprising the population, are adequately represented in the Force, and the three languages, Hindi, Creole and Franco-Mauritian are in daily use. While all Indo-Mauritian members of the Force speak Creole, a very small percentage of the Coloured (Creole) members and none of the Franco-Mauritian members speak Hindi.

It is the aim of all Commissioners of Police, with the assistance of the small staff of English officers attached to the Force, to train the members of the Force on the same lines as the training given in Forces in England, and still more, to endeavour to inculcate upon the local policeman the characteristics of the English "Bobby" tact, patience, tolerance, good humour, initiative and the ability to rely on one's own judgment and resources.

As is the case in all parts of the Empire to-day, far more is expected of the Police officer in Mauritius than was the case 25 to 50 years ago. It no longer suffices for him to be a strong burly policeman with illiteracy no handicap to the performance of his duties. With the spread of education and political consciousness among the population, the policeman, even in this remote part of the Empire, has to be educated, to be intelligent and possess a high degree of civic responsibility if he is to play his part properly.

A Police Force can only be as good as the population from which it is drawn, but it is essential that it should not lag behind the highest standard found in the community which it serves, and of which it is an integral part.

A loyal, incorruptible and contented Police Force is a reliable safeguard for the maintenance of law, and order, the prevention of crime and the very existence of the State itself. It is the first bulwark of defence of any administration against the onslaught of sudden and violent political upheavals or civil strife.

The history of the Force during the war years was not as exciting as those of other Forces in countries actually invaded by the enemy. Nevertheless the Police were called upon to take their place in the plan designed for the defence of the Colony and they responded to the call.

This led to a considerable increase in the strength of the Force. On the outbreak of war there were 601 officers and other ranks but during the war 1,128 officers and other ranks, among whom are included 500 auxiliary police constables, enlisted for the duration of the war.

Soon after the declaration of war by Japan, a request was made for the Police to supply a military company to take its place in the front line with the soldiers in the event of attack. A company of 250 officers and men was provided and trained by Army Instructors, but as soon as regular troops arrived to take their place, the company was disbanded and returned to normal police duties.

The Force also supplied personnel for coast-watch duties at many points around the Island.

In addition to these responsibilities, the Force was fully occupied in coping with the number of offences which were created by emergency war legislation.

The Force also made its contribution to the Armed Services overseas. Ten men volunteered and served in the R.A.F. and two made the supreme sacrifice.

The primary duties of the Force are, of course, the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of law and order. In addition, it is responsible for the control of traffic, immigration, the issuing of licences (motor vehicles, drivers, liquor and firearms), the collection of revenue averaging Rs 2,000,000 per annum, and the supervision of licensed premises. Within recent years, it has been found possible to divest the Force of a number of extraneous duties which could not properly be called the responsibility of a Police Force.

#### ***Establishment***

The Mauritius Police Force has an establishment of 26 gazetted officers and 612 other ranks, all of whom are locally born with the exception of 10 officers who are posted from England or transferred from other Colonial Forces. In addition there are 20 police women employed on clerical duties. Police women were enlisted during the war to replace men whose services were otherwise required and have now become a permanent feature of the Force.

#### ***Weapons and Equipment***

The Force is an armed body issued with .308 rifles, but in 1946 all rifles were withdrawn except from the picked personnel

forming the armed parties for use in civil disturbances of a serious nature.

Every member of the rank and file is issued with a baton which is the policeman's first weapon of defence and offence; armed parties are only used as a last resource.

Tear gas bombs are also available for use in civil disturbance.

#### *Distribution of personnel*

The personnel of the Force is distributed among :

- (a) Headquarters staff
- (b) Criminal Investigation Department
- (c) Six districts with 42 stations between them
- (d) Revenue and Traffic Branch
- (e) Forensic Science Laboratory
- (f) Training School
- (g) Pay and Quartermaster Branch
- (h) Railway Police
- (i) The Band
- (j) Rodrigues.

#### *Recruiting and Training*

Recruits have to undergo a medical examination and simple educational test before being accepted. They are then posted to the Training School for three months.

The training follows generally the lines of training in the Metropolitan Police Force.

#### *Transport and Communications*

The Force is as mobile as funds permit, and in these days of modern transport mobility is the essence of good and prompt Police action here as elsewhere. The Force possesses 5 lorries, 6 cars, 11 motor cycles, 3 wireless vans, 6 patrol vans, most of which need replacement.

It is however still possible to transport 300 men at short notice to any part of the Island.

In addition to the wireless vans, communications are maintained by telephone and despatch riders, but two stations out of forty-two are still without telephone. Every effort is being made to have telephones installed at all stations.

#### *Library*

The library with 12,545 volumes (novels, science, biographies and reference books) is available for use by all ranks. Books and papers are imported regularly from England and France.

#### *Games and Recreation*

As much time off as possible is given for the playing of games and recreation generally. The Force can to-day boast of good hockey and football teams. Inter-district games and games

against outside teams are frequently arranged. Police sports are held annually, and it is hoped to have an annual Police concert in future.

Officers, non-commissioned officers and constables, have their own separate Mess or Recreation Room where fellow members entertain themselves with a radio, billiards, draughts and other indoor games.

### **Prevention and Suppression of Crime**

Crime is a word usually employed by most people to mean all breaches of all laws, but in this Colony it is clearly defined in law as being an offence punishable by death or penal servitude.

All other breaches of law are defined as misdemeanours—offences punishable by imprisonment exceeding 10 days but not exceeding one year and/or a fine exceeding Rs 100 but not exceeding Rs 1,000, and contraventions—offences punishable by imprisonment not exceeding 10 days and/or a fine not exceeding Rs 100.

In dealing with figures of crime and breaches of the law, it must always be remembered that many crimes or offences are not preventable, no matter how efficient the Force, but in some cases steps can be taken to prevent or to minimize the incidence of crime.

Such steps are frequent patrols by men on foot and in vehicles, including wireless vans, the continuous supervision of known thieves, receivers of stolen property and habitual criminals. In addition, at all large Stations, special Crime Branches have been established with picked men whose sole responsibility is to employ all methods for the prevention and detection of crime. These Branches have proved a success.

There has been no extraordinary outbreak of crime in the Colony in recent years.

The total number of crimes, misdemeanours and contraventions dealt with by the Police during 1946 was 81,456, and the average for the past 5 years was 27,970.

More than half of these cases were of a minor character and included such items as breaches of traffic and revenue laws, petty thefts, trivial assaults and disturbances.

The Criminal Investigation Department with its records of crime and criminals, Finger-Print Bureau and *Modus Operandi*, and the Forensic Science Laboratory, with its scientific equipment and treatment of exhibits, play an important part in the detection of crime.

### **STATISTICAL REPORT ON CRIME**

#### **Offences Reported to the Police**

The number of crimes, misdemeanours and contraventions is stated hereunder, comparative figures for 1944 and 1945 being also given.

		1944	1945	1946
Crimes	...	632	699	511
Misdemeanours	...	14,278	12,969	12,961
Contraventions	...	11,848	12,296	17,911
Total	...	<u>26,753</u>	<u>25,964</u>	<u>31,447</u>

### Offences Against Property

The number of offences against property again showed decrease when compared with the number of offences reported in 1944 and 1945.

		1944	1945	1946
Burglary (larceny—night breaking)	...	189	124	101
Robbery (larceny with violence)	...	123	103	81
Predial larceny	...	790	618	421
Other forms of larceny	...	4,188	3,449	3,471
Total	...	<u>5,190</u>	<u>4,294</u>	<u>4,093</u>

### Government Chemist

In 75 cases, exhibits were sent to the Government Chemist for analysis.

### Property Stolen and Recovered

The amount of property stolen was valued at Rs 197,140.00 by the complainants, of which property to the value of Rs 70,561.63 was recovered, i.e., an average of 36 per cent. The figures for the two previous years were :

		1944	1945	1946
Property reported stolen	...	163,056.87	178,490.64	178,490.64
Property recovered	...	51,278.72	65,877.39	65,877.39
Percentage of recovery	...	31%	36%	36%

### Serious Cases

Murder	...	...	...	...	...
Manslaughter	...	...	...	...	...
Wounds and blows causing death without intention to kill	...	...	...	...	3
Larceny	...	...	...	...	3,263
Receiving stolen property	...	...	...	...	36
Embezzlement	...	...	...	...	695
Burglary	...	...	...	...	111
Robbery	...	...	...	...	86
Forgery	...	...	...	...	23
Gambling	...	...	...	...	108
Predial larceny	...	...	...	...	425
Profiteering	...	...	...	...	322
Hoarding of currency	...	...	...	...	3
Offences under the distillery and liquor laws	...	...	...	...	114
Other serious offences	...	...	...	...	290

*Cases Sent Before Court*

The following statement shows the number of Police cases in which action was taken before Court, the number of persons prosecuted, the number of persons convicted and the number of persons awaiting trial at the close of the year.

<i>Offences</i>	<i>Cases Prosecuted</i>	<i>Persons Prosecuted</i>	<i>Persons Convicted</i>	<i>Persons awaiting trial at the end of 1946</i>
Crimes ...	845	522	383	112
Offences of Misdemeanours ...	3,483	3,987	3,404	377
Contraventions ...	18,588	14,610	13,765	1,240
Total ...	17,866	19,119	17,552	1,729

Out of 594 cases of crime reported, 845 were detected, i.e., a percentage of approximately 58 per cent detections.

*Dangerous Drugs Ordinance*

Twenty cases, as detailed below, were prosecuted under this ordinance.

<i>Nature of Offence</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>	<i>Quantity seized and forfeited</i>
Possession of gandia ...	... 11	... 3,191.5 grammes
Cultivating gandia ...	... 2	... 12 gandia stems and 22 plants
Possession of prepared opium	... 3	... 7 grammes
Possession of raw opium	... 1	... 391½ grammes
Using premises for smoking of opium	1	

In two cases, persons were convicted for having been found in possession of pipes and utensils for opium smoking, all of which were seized and destroyed.

*Fires*

The total number of cases of fire reported for the year under review was 251.

289 were accidental, 4 were pending enquiry at the close of the year and the other 8 cases were classified as follows :

Person ... ... ... ...	6	(In three cases, no action was taken for want of evidence; in one of these, the accused died in jail whilst held on remand pending trial; in another, fire was set by a mental probationer; and in the remaining case, one accused is awaiting trial).
Lighting fire at a distance less than 50 metres from a building		
Plantation ... ... ...	2	
	—	
	8	
	—	

The majority of fires were caused by negligently permitting cooking fires in grass huts to get out of control. Others were caused by the burning of grass lands and failure to prevent the flames from spreading.

The whole question of danger from fires to towns and villages is being carefully examined, since recent inspections of premises which contain petrol, carburant, and other inflammable substances show that there is a very real danger to life and property for which there is at present no adequate safeguard.

### *Floods and Cyclones*

There were no floods during the year.

A cyclone visited the Island on the 31st January, 1946. No damage was caused to buildings apart from a few huts which were blown down. Foodstuff, vegetable and sugarcane plantations were slightly damaged but this was to a certain extent remedied by the good climatic conditions which prevailed thereafter. No casualties were recorded and the few persons rendered homeless were given shelter.

### *Juvenile Crime*

The number of juvenile offenders prosecuted during the year is given below with comparative figures for 1944 and 1945 :

	1944	1945	1946
Male ...	860	220	392
Female ...	28	20	31

The offences for which juveniles were arrested and convicted were :

	1945	1946
Manslaughter ...	1	—
Larceny ...	97	14
Larceny predial ...	14	—
Larceny being two (or more) in number	2	—
Larceny with breaking ...	4	—
Larceny with breaking at night	1	—
Possession of stolen property	6	—
Embezzlement ...	5	—
Swindling ...	—	—
Attempt upon chastity ...	—	—
Indecent act in public ...	1	—
False and malicious denunciation in writing	—	—
Arson ...	—	—
Plundering ...	—	—
Perjury ...	—	—

### *General Remarks on Crime*

The Police dealt with a greater number of offences than in either of the last two years. It is not, however, considered that

This implies a greater incidence in the commission of offences. An analysis of the figures in this part of the report will show that the greater part of the increase is in respect of contraventions, and it is more than probable that the recording and dealing with those offences, which were certainly latent in the previous years, is the result of improved Police work. In the coming years, if this trend is maintained, it is probable that the figure for contraventions reported will steadily decrease, as the offending public will realise the improved efficiency of the Police on the roads and on patrol. Both the number of vehicles imported and road accidents have increased and it is therefore essential that greater vigilance on the roads of the island should be observed. The percentage increase in the number of contraventions in 1946 over the figure for the previous two years is 50.

While the number of misdemeanours brought to light is very much the same as in past years, the decrease in the crime figure for 1945 is about 15 per cent, and there is evidence to show that juvenile with aggravating circumstances is on the decrease. Methods for the location and supervision of habitual criminals have been improved and are in no small measure responsible for the decrease in crime and for the percentage of detection in the number of crimes being the reasonably good figure of 58 per cent. More juveniles have been brought to book and a good number of them were the offenders responsible for fowl-house and poultry-farm incendies so much complained of in the past. It is difficult to say whether juvenile crime is on the increase, or whether the larger figure merely indicates better Police work.

The Force has grappled more successfully with offenders this year than it has done since pre-war years. The table at the top of page 99 of this report indicates that over 19,000 persons were sent before the Court on their trial for breaches of the law.

#### PRISONS

The years 1939-45 may, as far as Prisons are concerned, be divided into three periods : 1939-42 (war emergency period), 1943-45 (Preparation for reconstruction), and 1946 (Reconstruction).

During the first two periods the Prisons were under the administrative control of the Police and during the third period were under their own Superintendent who was directly responsible to the Colonial Secretary.

It was intended that a Superintendent of Prisons should be appointed in 1939 but the outbreak of war made this impossible. During the first period the Government, in the interests of the prosecution of the war, utilised prison labour to prepare defensive positions, and to make camouflage nets and uniforms for the Home Guard. The Senior Chief Officer was seconded to organise the

Passive Defence, and the buildings at Beau Bassin were converted into a Camp for Jewish Detainees. This work reached a peak in the months that followed the attack on Pearl Harbour.

As the pressure of the emergency decreased from 1943 onwards, Government examined a number of projects connected with penal reform. These included extra-mural employment, discharge prisoners aid, probation of offenders, compulsory-attendance centres and the policy regarding employment of prisoners.

Unfortunately during this period there occurred such events as the disastrous cyclones of January, 1945, the outbreak of Infant Paralysis and the strike in the Night-Soil Service of Curepipe, after which the Prisons were called upon to assist in the emergencies created.

The work of the Prisons, both staff and prisoners, during the cyclone emergency in clearing roads for supplies and the cutting of poles for repair work received recognition by the Governor, and did the industry that was set up in the Prisons for making appliances for the Orthopaedic Hospital at Floreal. The Senior Chief Officer has been sent to England to study this work.

During this period also Government established the principle that prison labour should not be used in such a way as to compete with local industries.

The reconstruction period started when in September, 1946, the Superintendent of Prisons arrived in the Colony and took over both the Prisons and the Industrial School from the Police.

Working on the reports and recommendations of the Committees that had already considered the matters mentioned above and by introducing a number of new ideas, recommendations were made to Government and a series of legislative and administrative changes were made.

The first of these was the Corporal Punishment (Amendment) Ordinance which brought the method of administration into line with the rest of the Empire, also the maximum number of strokes permissible. It also reduced the offences against prison discipline for which this punishment was applicable to (1) Mutiny, (2) Incitement to Mutiny, (3) Violence to members of the Prison Staff and (4) Attempts at (1), (2) or (3). In other words, flogging in prison can only be inflicted in Mauritius according to the same rules as are applicable in England. In keeping with the spirit of this Ordinance the Industrial School Regulations were amended so that the Superintendent of the Industrial School is obliged to refer to the Visiting Committee or a Magistrate before a whipping can be enforced. During the current year there has been no case of corporal punishment in either the Prisons or the Industrial School.

A number of both major and minor changes were made in the Statutory Regulations governing the Prisons. Most important of these are the introduction of an earning scheme for untried

prisoners and the addition of graded privileges of additional association, visits and letters.

The Capital Punishment (Amendment) Ordinance removed from the Commissioner of Police the responsibility for carrying out a death sentence and placed it upon the Superintendent of Prisons ; concurrently with this the Regulations for carrying out sentence of death were revised. This has done away with the flying of the black flag.

The Estimates for 1946-47 for the first time contain a provision of Rs 1,000 for Aid to discharged prisoners. This has been administered by a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Superintendent of Prisons and consisting of representatives of religious denominations and certain Government officials and private persons. Their attention has been principally directed towards long-sentence men and the provision of tools for those starting in trades. A number of jobs have also been secured.

A Bill to introduce Extra Mural Employment in lieu of imprisonment for those committed in default of payment of fines is now under consideration by Government. The possibilities of extending its scope to include other persons sentenced to short periods of imprisonment will be considered when experience is gained.

The Probation Offenders Ordinance, though not confined to juveniles, is dealt with under Juvenile Delinquency.

Concurrently with these changes, Government made financial provision for the reconstitution of the Prisons on more modern lines. The Staff was increased by 19 members in the 1946-47 Estimates and the hours of duty were entirely changed to provide an 8 hour day with alternate Sundays free for the entire Staff.

Preparations are in hand for the re-opening of Grand River North West Prison for young prisoners, to be run on modified Borstal lines, and for the use of Port Louis, where the Orthopaedic workshops will be situated, for long-sentence men.

With the exception of the Night-Soil Service gang at Curepipe all prisoners are now employed within the area of the prison lands. By the provision of a motor van to the Department, the escorting of prisoners is possible without the spectacle of men handcuffed to a Prison Warden being seen in public. Also the collection of stores is no longer a matter of a hand cart pushed by prisoners.

During the years since 1939 the daily average of persons in prison and the total number of persons sentenced to prison has varied as shown :—

Year	Daily Average	Convictions	Death Sentences	Releases
1939	428	1,769	—	—
1940	467	2,217	—	—
1941	482	2,267	—	—
1942	490	2,105	—	—
1943	580	2,606	1	—
1944	559	2,596	—	—
1945	550	2,153	—	—
1946	565	2,028	9	8

This variation can be accounted for by the war, with its additional legislation, and the extraordinary conditions that have produced similar crime waves elsewhere. The continuance of a high and even increased daily average after the number of convictions has started to fall is due to the increased number of long sentences that were awarded in the latter part of the war period.

## Chapter X: Public Utilities

### WATER SUPPLIES

The districts of Plaines Wilhems and Port Louis have a filtered and chlorinated water supply which is adequate and pure for the population of 186,000.

The remaining population of 233,000 inhabitants in the other districts obtain their water from local streams, from private house supplies or from public fountains. The water is protected from pollution but it is not filtered or chlorinated. Improvements in these districts are needed, especially with regard to quantity and quality.

In 1946, as many improvements as possible, such as the laying of new mains and extensive cleaning, were carried out and further improvements await the deliveries of materials from England.

All water undertakings are government-owned in Mauritius except in Port Louis where the supply is a municipal concern.

In 1946, a complete survey of water supplies has been carried out and plans have been prepared for new works and improvements and enlargement of the existing water supplies. A sum of Rs 19,466,000 is devoted to this head in the Development and Welfare Scheme ; the first instalment for the most urgent improvements has been approved by the Secretary of State.

### IRRIGATION

The Government is pursuing its policy of extending irrigation in the Colony. Plans have been prepared which link up irrigation and hydro-electric developments.

1946 saw the start of new works at Mare Longue Irrigation Reservoir. It was started in January, 1946, as an emergency work designed to absorb labour discharged from the forces.

Repairs to the largest feeder channel in the Colony, the canal from Midlands to Nicolière, the irrigation reservoir for the northern districts, were undertaken and are nearing completion. This work absorbed a certain number of ex-servicemen.

#### ELECTRICITY

The advantages of electricity for domestic and industrial purposes were not realised by the public until just before the outbreak of the war. There followed a large demand for the service which could only be satisfied to a limited extent owing to difficulties in obtaining equipment. When in early 1946 supplies again began to arrive in reasonable quantities, they were quickly bought up and within a matter of about three months the whole of the available generating capacity was needed to meet these new connections. This unexpected development left the Colony with no available generating capacity with which to supply additional connections. The position was made more difficult by the long periods required by manufacturers before they could deliver generating equipment. The net result is that development is held up for a period of about fifteen months which is the time needed to effect the delivery and installation of the additional generating plant.

Planning for future developments includes the joint use of water storage for domestic, irrigation and power requirements. By this means the maximum use will be made of the Colony's water resources, as water for irrigation will first pass through turbines thereby generating electric power. A start had been made with the water works and the full scheme may be completed within six years, but water storage for power production should be available in eighteen months.

The revenue from the Government undertaking amounted to Rs 801,214, and expenditure Rs 194,437. The revenue balance of Rs 106,777 represents a return of 16.5 per cent on the end-of-the-year investment of Rs 645,446. A total of 12,743,904 units were sold to the public, of which 4,423,839 were sold by the Government.

#### TELEPHONES

The demand for telephone service continued to increase. Plans prepared during the year based on future forecasts include the replacement by larger units of five rural automatic exchanges, a new Central Battery exchange for Vacoas, extensions to the existing exchanges at Curepipe, Rose Hill, and Port Louis, and the provision of additional underground cables between the exchanges of Port Louis, Rose Hill, Vacoas and Curepipe.

This year is the first since its transfer to the Government that

the undertaking has not shown a revenue balance after all charges had been met. Revenue amounted to Rs 402,047 and Expenditure Rs 387,551, before allowing for depreciation. The end-of-the-year investment in the undertaking was Rs 1,847,509. Unlike most telephone undertakings, the tariffs remained unchanged during the war in spite of increased costs for labour and material. The increase in expenditure has now overtaken the revenue surplus and, if the undertaking is to remain financially self-supporting, the charges must be increased. The number of telephone stations increased from 2,852 to 3,216 during the year.

## Chapter XI: Communications

During the year the recommendations of the Civil Service Commission in regard to the salaries of Railway employees have been accepted by Government and necessary provision has been made in the Estimates for 1946-47, representing an increase of expenditure of Rs 61,500 per annum.

In November last, at long last, two of the boilers ordered at the beginning of the war were received in the Island. The position in regard to boilers is still very bad and locomotives, carriages and wagons are in poor condition on account of the difficulty of obtaining spares, timber and paint.

The Savannah Sugar Estate have taken over the Bois Cheri Light Railway, as well as the engine and wagons purchased by them, and have transported their canes by their own means. This is a step in the right direction and it is hoped that at a later date it will be possible to induce Britannia and Rose Belle Estates to do the same in regard to the portions of this tram line used for the transport of canes to their mills.

The demobilization of the majority of the railway men from the services was effected during the year and these men were re-absorbed immediately by the Department.

The influx of chassis, spares, tyres and petrol has encouraged road competition, which is becoming very acute again, and most people naturally prefer to be picked up and dropped at their door steps by buses at third-class rates whilst shopkeepers prefer a door to door transport of their goods to avoid double handling. This situation affects adversely the revenue of the railways which are nevertheless still indispensable for the transport of sugar.

The time will come, however, when unremunerative railway services will have to be closed down to avoid unnecessary expenditure when there is parallel service competing successfully with them.

The railway administration has submitted a scheme for the gradual replacement of the railway by a properly organised and controlled road service and this scheme is being considered by Government.

#### ROADS

Out of 700 miles of roads in Mauritius, 200 have a tarred surface. Maintenance of the existing roads suffered during the war on account of :

- (i) lack of labour ;
- (ii) construction of urgent works of a military nature, such as construction and enlargement of coast roads to military posts ; and
- (iii) shortage of bitumen.

In 1946 repairs and improvements to the roads were undertaken on a large scale to make up for the ground lost during the war years. A new road, seven miles long, to shorten the distance from Flacq district to Curepipe, was started as an emergency work to absorb labour discharged from the forces.

Provision has been made in the Development and Welfare Estimates for the bitumen treatment of 200 miles of water-bound roads.

Road vehicles had been so very successful in their competition with the railways for a number of years that, at the beginning of 1939, only reduced goods services were run on the railways during the intercrop period and the number of coaches on passenger trains had been diminished.

Engines, carriages and wagons not being fully utilised, drastic curtailments had been made in their maintenance for some years, entailing short-time work in the Plaine Lauzun workshops.

The future was gloomy and Government was considering a scheme for closing down the passenger service on all lines except Port Louis—Curepipe, to effect further economies ; when the war broke out the necessity of conserving fuel and spare parts and of reducing imports generally emphasised the urgency of eliminating duplicate and unremunerative services with the result that in January, 1940, the scheme referred to above was put into effect.

Instead of retrenching the redundant staff, the men were seconded for duty to other departments and encouraged to join the services voluntarily.

The General Manager of Railways was entrusted with the control of coal, petrol, power alcohol and lubricating oils for the whole Island and was required to look after the extension of the Sack Factory, which was re-opened under Government control and which helped considerably to tide over the difficulty of obtaining sacks for the packing of sugar.

The railways throughout the war have reduced their demands for iron and steel and other imports as much as possible and the relaying of the track has been postponed to better days.

When the strategic situation in the Indian Ocean was causing anxiety, the railway workshops undertook a large amount of work for the services, ranging from an armoured lorry to very small items ; most of the railway telephones were manned until the look-out posts were linked to the military headquarters. Engines usually stabled on the coast were removed, an ambulance train was kept in readiness in Port Louis and the men were encouraged to join either the Home Guard or the A.R.P. Services.

In the course of 1942, the shortage of petrol, chassis, spare parts and tyres for motor vehicles caused an increase in traffic on the railways and, when it became necessary to find transport for the construction of the aerodrome and other defence works in the south of the Island, it was decided to re-open the Mahebourg and Savanne lines to passenger traffic.

As time went on there was a complete reversion of passenger and goods traffic to the railways necessitating the re-opening of all the lines which had been closed to passenger traffic in the absence of the trained railway men who had joined the Services. Engines and rolling stock had been neglected for years and could not be brought up to standard for want of spares, which could not be obtained from home.

The transport of goods for the Services, the travelling of prisoners to the Detainment Camp, the constant decentralisation and distribution of food stocks and the running of troop trains brought considerable pressure on the railways which were now running over-crowded on all lines to such an extent that the men of the National Service had to be transported in converted goods wagons.

The arrival without any warning in the full-crop period of ships in convoys with cargoes of coal, fertilizers, sacks and sleepers caused considerable difficulties which were increased by complications arising out of the transport of food crops.

To ensure a better utilisation of the wagons, the railways had to enforce a minimum wagon loading of ten tons and the running of special passenger trains for pilgrimages, regattas, races and other non essential purposes was cancelled.

The war lasting longer than was at first expected, considerable difficulty was experienced in keeping the engines running without spares ; new boilers were not available and this state of affairs made it necessary to increase the number of men in the Plaine Lauzun workshops to cope with the heavy repairs required by the rolling stock which could not be renewed in the normal way.

At times the position as regards coal stocks was very acute ; on one occasion there was coal only for one fortnight at the railways.

The shipping section of the Department, which looks after the clearance and despatch of all Government goods, had a very hard time with the enormous quantities of goods received together

instead of being received from several ships at reasonable intervals. The clearance and despatch of goods for the Controller of Supplies was also effected by the railways and involved very big tonnages.

Along with the difficulties and complications referred to above, the prices of coal, sleepers and boilers increased tremendously and the Department had to pay a substantial amount in cost of living bonuses to the staff; rates were increased in 1942 and fares in 1944, but no subsequent increase was made as the policy of Government was not to cause any increase in the cost of production of sugar and the cost of living in the Colony.

The following summary in tabular form will give at a glance an account of the work done by the railways in the period under review :

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The total number of passenger and goods vehicles running on the roads of the Colony of Mauritius at the outbreak of the war was just over 3,000. In the course of the war this number fell to about 2,500 and has again risen in 1946 to over 3,000.

### *Passenger Road Transport*

(i) In 1939, following the passing of the Road Traffic Ordinance, a Board, called the Transport Control Board, was formed. It is composed of the Commissioner of Police (Chairman); the General Manager of Railways; the Director, Public Works Department; the Deputy Commissioner of Police; representatives of the Municipality of Port Louis, of the township boards of Beau Bassin—Rose Hill, Quatre Bornes and Curepipe; and also of representatives of as many classes of the population as possible, all appointed by the Governor. Its duties are to grant and transfer licences for the twenty-seven bus routes of the Island; prepare tariffs of fares and time-tables for certain routes for public service and goods vehicles; and provide for bus stands, bus stops and taxi stands as required.

(ii) Mauritius is divided into nine districts and has approximately 246 miles of main roads. A table, showing the main roads per district and how buses and taxis are distributed, is given below :

			Main Roads Miles (approx.)	Buses	Taxis
Port Louis ...	...	...	6		137
Plaines Wilhems	...	...	28	64	282
Black River	...	...	26		1
Savanne	...	...	27	80	13
Grand Port	...	...	27		28
Flacq	...	...	50	14	
Moka	...	...	24		32
Pamplemousses	...	...	80	87	22
Riviere du Rempart	...	...	83		19
Total	...		246	145	493

(iii) Local buses are built on 26 H.P. or 32 H.P. Bedford, Morris, Austin, Chevrolet and Ford V 8 chassis and are all twenty-three or twenty-seven seaters (including the driver and conductor).

(iv) Some taxis ply for hire on stands and others from their garages and can be obtained by telephone in the main towns and villages.

(v) During the war great difficulties were experienced by

owners of motor vehicles, particularly buses and taxis, in keeping them running, owing to the shortage of tyres, petrol and spare parts. On the one hand, many vehicles were forced off the road. On the other, the number of passengers steadily increased for the following reasons :

(a) Up-country traders had to travel to and from Port Louis several times a week to attend the Control of Supplies Department to obtain the necessary permits for foodstuffs and other essential commodities which were all rationed.

(b) A considerable number of persons who were accustomed to travel in their privately owned cars to attend to their work in Port Louis had to resort to travelling in public-service vehicles to save their tyres and fuel.

(c) The reduced number of buses could not cope with the number of travellers because of bad tyres, a reduced allocation of power alcohol and constant breakdowns, due to their state of wear and to the lack of spare parts.

(vi) By the end of 1946 new bus and truck chassis and new cars began to arrive in the Colony and the situation was eased to some extent. A great number of bus chassis, however, are still required as many of the machines now in service are in very poor condition and every day a number of them may be seen broken down by the side of the road and their passengers waiting for transport.

(vii) The restriction on the number of taxi-car licences which had had to be envisaged by the Board during the war years in view of the shortage of petrol, tyres and spare parts, was removed by the end of 1946.

(viii) Bus fares were increased by 75 per cent during the war to discourage unnecessary travelling and also to compensate for the fact that bus owners could no longer make both ends meet, the price of petrol, tyres and spare parts having increased to a greater extent.

At the end of 1945, the fares were reduced by 25 per cent and are now approximately 3 cents per mile.

(ix) The fares for taxis were increased from 30 cents during the day and 35 cents during the night to 35 and 40 cents, respectively, per mile.

#### *Goods Transport by Road*

(i) The transport of heavy goods and fertilisers is compulsorily effected by rail.

(ii) The majority of lorries are built on 2.5 to 3 ton Bedford, Chevrolet and Ford V 8 26 to 39 H.P. chassis.

(iii) There is only one main lorry stand in Port Louis where the majority of the lorries that ply for hire may be found.

(iv) Lorries are used for the transport of foodstuffs from Port Louis, the only commercial harbour, to other towns and villages; for the transport of firewood and charcoal from the forests

to the towns ; for the transport of rum and local motor spirit from distilleries to Port Louis and for the transport of sugar-canies from the fields to the mills.

(v) No great difficulties ever arose with regard to this form of transport in view of the fact that the number of lorries, though reduced, was sufficient to deal with the reduced imports, and sugar estates (sugar being the main export trade of the Island) were given priority in the supply of petrol and tyres.

#### *Police Control*

Under the provisions of the Road Traffic Ordinance, 1939, the Police Traffic Branch are responsible for the quarterly examination of all public-service and goods vehicles with the object of keeping them in as fit a state as possible for the safety of the public.

During the war years Police examiners were instructed to exercise great care whilst examining buses and lorries, some of which were considered just fit to be run with safety. They would perhaps have been refused a certificate of fitness before the war, but, in view of the transport difficulties, they had to be kept on the road.

The Police Traffic Branch are also responsible for the licensing of drivers.

Motor cycle and foot patrols have been active in trying to inculcate road courtesy in road users and to reduce the accident rate.

Normal shipping services have not yet been resumed either as regards passenger or cargo traffic. It is this irregularity which makes comparison with pre-war years useless and the forecasting of revenue and trade in the near future difficult.

#### BROADCASTING

Before the war broadcasting in Mauritius was operated by a commercial radio station, the broadcaster receiving a proportion of the radio-licence fees.

During the war Government assumed partial control and considerably increased the programmes in which special emphasis was placed on explaining the war aims of the Allied Nations and combating defeatist or subversive propaganda. Talks were frequently given on the many critical problems which the Colony had to face during the war years.

In June, 1944, the Government took over all local broadcasting and a re-organised service, the Mauritius Broadcasting Service, was inaugurated, operating on wave lengths in the 225 metre and 42 metre bands from two temporary studios kindly placed at the disposal of the service by the township boards of Curepipe and Rose Hill.

Later, it was decided to take over the former Training College of the Schools Department at Curepipe as the permanent quarters of the Mauritius Broadcasting Service and, after the necessary alterations had been made, broadcasting from the new premises began in September, 1946. A News Service, which monitors Reuters and the London Press Service for distribution to the press and for the preparation of Mauritius Broadcasting Service newscasts, is accommodated in the same building.

There are now four general and one Hindustani transmissions on 225 metres and 42 metres every week-day and three on Sundays, the station being on the air for  $5\frac{1}{4}$  hours daily. Close co-operation is maintained with the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Central Office of Information, London, and the London Transcription Service distributed by the British Broadcasting Corporation is of great value in building up programmes. The monthly British Broadcasting Corporation feature "Calling Mauritius" is much appreciated and is relayed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Service.

Advance features from the African and General Overseas Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation are received by telegram or air mail and incorporated in the local programme schedule which is printed weekly for circulation to listeners.

The listening public is mainly concentrated in urban areas and there are at present a little over 3,000 receiving sets in the Colony, broadcasts reaching about 4 per cent of the total population. This number may be expected to increase when inexpensive receivers become available. In rural areas it is hoped that with the encouragement and aid of village councils and listening clubs it will soon be possible to reach a much wider audience.

The Mauritius Broadcasting Service is at present rather immature and much remains to be done to improve technical quality and programme construction; it has however proved its value and popularity as a medium of instruction and entertainment and is having an important influence on the social and economic development of the people.

#### POSTS, TELEGRAPHS AND WIRELESS

The usual facilities which the Post Office provides in regard to correspondence, parcels and remittances are gradually being extended to remote areas as their postal needs can be firmly estimated. Practically every village has a house-delivery of letters and a stamp seller, while the larger villages are provided either with a Post Office or a Postal Agency. Of the 59 Post Offices and Postal Agencies 34 are Telegraph Offices and 16 Telephone Offices. Mails from one office to another are carried by the Government Railways. With the exception of 19 outposts in outlying localities, the offices and agencies are on the railway lines. The offices and localities lying out far from the railway

stations are served by bicycle postmen or by motor-car mail-contractors.

Incoming surface mails are received either by direct ships or via South Africa ; outgoing mails are despatched by direct ships or via South Africa, Mombasa, India or Ceylon.

The outstanding feature of the postal service for the year 1946 has been the introduction of an air service between Mauritius and Kenya by means of the planes of Air France. All mails from Mauritius are despatched weekly by the French plane to Nairobi for onward transmission ; air mails for Mauritius are similarly collected at Nairobi for transmission by the French plane, except British mails which are sent *a decouvert* to Paris for carriage by the French Service direct to Mauritius.

Parcel mails from Great Britain are received only by direct ships. Parcels from Continental Europe are received through the United Kingdom.

Remittances are made by both money orders and postal orders. There are direct Money Order exchanges with the United Kingdom, South Africa, India, Ceylon, Aden, Seychelles, Hong Kong and Australia ; remittances to almost any place may be made through these offices. Remittances by telegraph may be made to the United Kingdom, South Africa, India, Seychelles and Rodrigues.

There is also a remittance service with England in respect of Trade Charge Orders.

Overseas Telecommunications are maintained by the Cable and Wireless Company Limited whose local station is in Port Louis. Cablegrams to and from Central Telegraph Offices are transmitted on the Government Telegraph lines. Rodrigues is connected with Mauritius by that Company's cable system.

Communication with the outside world is also provided by a Wireless Coast Station. The Station can transmit within a limited range to ships equipped with wireless. Radio-telegrams can be handed in at any telegraph office for transmission.

## Chapter XII: Science and the Arts

### THE MAURITIUS INSTITUTE

The project for the foundation of an Institute in Mauritius first took shape in 1880 when an ordinance was passed with the active support of the Governor, Sir George Bowen, "to establish and incorporate a Public Institute, a Public Museum and a Public Library, for the purpose of promoting the general study and cultivation of the various branches and departments of Art, Science, Literature and Philosophy, and for the instruction and recreation of the people."

The first stone of the present building was laid by Sir George

Bowen on the 28th November, 1880, and the Natural History collections bequeathed to the Colony by Mr. Julien Desjardins were transferred to the new building from the old Royal College in 1885. The Public Library was opened in 1903 following the munificent bequest of the Sir Virgile Naz library which formed the nucleus of the present collections.

To-day, the Institute comprises a Public Library, a Natural History Museum and an Art Gallery; in addition the following Scientific Societies are incorporated with the Institute: Royal Society of Arts and Sciences, the Société Medicale de l'Île Maurice and the Société des Chimistes. It is open daily to the public except on Sundays and public holidays, admission free from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is visited during the course of the year by more than 64,000 people.

The administration of the Institute is assisted by a Board of Directors, appointed annually by the Governor, including three members appointed on the recommendation of the incorporated Societies. A Library Committee and a Museum Committee are set up each year to manage the affairs of the Library and Museum respectively.

With the advice and assistance of the Library and Museum Associations of London, a report on the re-organisation of the Institute has been prepared and is now under consideration. The recommendations include the separation of the general library from the Museum, the appointment of a full time qualified librarian and the erection of a new building to accommodate the Library and Art Gallery.

### *The Public Library*

The stock comprises more than 32,000 volumes about equally divided between French and English. The Library has a large and valuable collection of Mauritiana and a special section on the natural history, fauna and flora of the Mascarene Islands and neighbouring regions. More than seventy-five periodicals are received annually. The Library is free to readers but a deposit of Rs 10 and an annual subscription of Rs 7.50 is required from borrowers. The valuable support of the British Council has resulted in important accessions to the Library from time to time and it is owing to the Council's generosity that it has been possible to make much needed additions to the periodicals both of technical and general interest.

### *The Natural History Museum*

During the war, the activities of the Museum were severely restricted. The staff were fully or partly occupied by war duties and after the entry of Japan into the war all the valuable specimens and books were dispersed to places of safety in Mauritius or overseas. Contact was lost with correspondents in many parts of the

world and it became impossible to send material abroad for examination and determination.

For the purpose of controlling the collections, the Curator is assisted by members of the Board of Directors and other voluntary helpers each of whom is in charge of a section of the Museum. Since the report of the Museum Re-organisation Committee was published in 1928 the collections have been radically overhauled and every effort is being made to assemble as complete material as possible of the fauna and flora of the Mascarene Islands and the surrounding ocean. In arranging the exhibits their economic and ecological significance is being carefully considered.

In the avian section there are two skeletons of the Dodo and one of the Solitaire as well as a complete collection of the endemic birds of Mauritius including the extinct Dutch pigeon *electroenas nitidissima* and the flightless Red Hen or *aphanapteryx*.

A special show case is devoted to the fauna of Round Island, a small islet 12 miles north of Mauritius.

There are now on view advanced collections of *crustacea*, *echinodermata* and *mollusca* both land and marine. A collection of tropical fish, many painted in their natural colours, is also of noteworthy interest.

The botanical section includes a herbarium of over 4,000 sheets of specimens from Mauritius, Rodriguez and some of the small Indian Ocean islands. Native and exotic timber specimens are displayed and a special section is devoted to diseases and pests of economic plants.

#### Research

The richness and variety of marine life in the surrounding seas together with the very interesting remnants of the indigenous land fauna and flora present excellent opportunities for research in pure, economic and marine biology, and the collections of the Museum form a valuable basis for investigation in these fields. In recent years research work in conjunction with institutions overseas has continued to develop and some of the principal lines of study now in progress may be briefly mentioned here.

The lizards of Mauritius are being studied by Mr. A. Loveridge, Curator of Reptiles, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard; among them are the curious endemic forms confined to Round Island. Dr. Melbourne Ward of the Australian Museum, Sydney, has recently published two important papers in the Mauritius Institute Bulletin on the *crustacea* of Mauritius and the Chagos Archipelago. Work continues on the land and marine *mollusca* in collaboration with the staff of the British Museum (Natural History), many new species have been described and investigations have begun on the edible marine *mollusca*. An entomological survey is in progress including the insects of Réunion and Rodrigues and papers have been published on the distribution of the insect fauna of the Mascarenes. Work has been resumed on the

vegetation of Mauritius; a paper on the climate of the upland forest is in the press and studies have begun on the curious genus *pandamus* (Screw Pines). Investigations on the marine algae of Mauritius by Professor F. Borgesen, University of Copenhagen, which were begun in 1939, are continuing, and five papers of great algological interest have been published in Denmark.

### *Publications.*

The Mauritius Institute publishes an annual report (suspended during the later war years) and a bulletin devoted to original papers on the fauna and flora of the Mascarene region to which many experts working in institutions overseas have contributed. The first part was published in 1936 and part 4 of the second volume appeared in 1946 with illustrated papers on land *mollusca* and insects. Copies of the parts still in print may be obtained on application to the Librarian and Curator, Mauritius Institute, Port Louis.

### SOCIETIES INCORPORATED WITH THE MAURITIUS INSTITUTE

#### (i) *The Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Mauritius.*

This Society, which was founded in 1829 under the title of "Société d'Histoire Naturelle", was honoured with a Royal Charter in 1846. Its activities extend to most branches of Natural History; Science and Art Lectures are delivered by its members and also by visitors of mark under its auspices. A catalogue of the library which contains many rare and valuable books on Natural History was published in 1945. Annual Transactions are published containing the proceedings and papers read before the Society.

(ii) *Societe Medicale de l'Ile Maurice.* The Society was founded in 1880 and includes among its members most of the medical practitioners of the Colony.

(iii) *Societe des Chimistes et des Techniciens des Industries Agricoles.* Formerly known as the Société des Chimistes, the Society has been recently re-organised and broadened by the inclusion of all engineers and technicians engaged in the sugar industry.

The Society is a technical body studying all questions relating to the growth of sugarcane and the manufacture of cane sugar. The papers and proceedings of the Society are published in the "Revue Agricole".

### HISTORICAL, LITERARY AND CULTURAL SOCIETIES

*Societe de l'Histoire de l'Ile Maurice.* This Society was founded in 1938 to foster and encourage the study of the Colony's history by collecting documents of local history, publishing historical works, and organising historical exhibitions and lectures.

One of the principal activities of the Society has been the production of the Dictionary of Mauritian Biography, 19 parts of

which have already appeared containing over 800 biographies of persons connected with Mauritius by birth or residence.

The Society awards prizes in the schools to encourage the study of Mauritius history.

The Society corresponds and exchanges publications with similar institutions overseas and collects material from the Archives at the Cape, the Hague, Batavia, Paris, London and Lisbon.

In 1939 the Society took part in the Adrien d'Epinay Centenary Celebrations; in 1942 a monument was unveiled to commemorate the explorer Matthew Flinders who was a prisoner for seven years in Mauritius. In 1944 the Society organised a Paul and Virginia bi-centenary exhibition in the Mauritius Institute.

*La Societe des Ecrivains Mauriciens.* The Society was founded in 1938 with the objects of encouraging the publication of literary works, establishing contact with similar institutions overseas, and maintaining unity among Mauritian writers.

The Society has participated in several conferences both in Mauritius and overseas.

Encouragement is given to young authors by the award of prizes and by assisting the publication of their works.

*Le Cercle Littéraire de Port Louis.* Le Cercle Littéraire originated as an association called *Hidoceana Verdstolo*, the object of which was to promote the study of Esperanto in Mauritius. Later it became a Literary Society and in July, 1917, assumed the title by which it is known to-day.

The principal object of the Society is to unite all those interested in French culture and ideals. Its principal aim is to encourage among the Mauritian people the study and diffusion of the French language and literature, by means of annual competitions and public lectures.

A review *L'Essor* is published by the Society.

*Alliance Francaise.* The local branch of the Alliance Francaise in Port Louis, Mauritius, was founded in 1884 with the object of fostering French culture by the introduction of French courses in schools, conducting annual examinations and organising meetings and conferences on French literature and art.

The Port Louis branch now has 240 members. Since relations have been resumed with France the activities of the branch have been revived and the valuable services of French lecturers have been obtained.

*The Mauritius Muslim Youth Brigade.* Founded in 1939 under the patronage of His Eminence Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui, the Mauritius Muslim Youth Brigade is one of the most active youth organisations in the Colony and young Muslims of all classes are encouraged to join the movement.

The Brigade organises lectures, debates and sports, and an

annual bulletin is published. In 1946 the Brigade was visited by a representative of the Muslim Youth Majlis of India to which it is affiliated.

*The Vacoas House of Debaters.* This Association is a literary Society which takes special interest in youth education and has started a scholarship fund, authorised by Government, with view to assisting pupils of the Royal College and Royal College School.

Fortnightly meetings are held for lectures, debates and plays and in 1946 a special radio programme was presented on the occasion of the Sankranti.

*The Indian League of Mauritius.* The Indian League of Mauritius was founded under the name of the Indian Student Association.

The principal objects of the League are to foster friendship and brotherhood among its members and to work for the social betterment of the Indian community.

The League organises debates, lectures and sports, publishes a quarterly magazine, and gives plays in English, French and Hindustani.

*The Mental and Physical Culture Association.* The principal aims of this Association are to encourage the study of English language and literature and to assist its members in obtaining facilities for enjoying sports such as tennis and football.

In 1946 the outstanding event was the celebration of the Hindu festival, the Diwali, at which sports were held and prizes distributed by His Excellency the Governor.

*The Hindu Pracharini Sadha and the Mauritius Hindu Parishad.* These Societies were established with the principal object of promoting and encouraging the study of Hindi in schools. Efforts are being made by the managing committees to produce a uniform curriculum and to improve the standard of teaching.

Collaboration with the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of Allahabad is maintained for conducting external examinations, in Higher Hindi in Mauritius.

*British Medical Association. Mauritius Branch.* The constitution, aims and privileges of the British Medical Association's branches were extended to Mauritius in 1939 when a division and branch of the British Medical Association was founded. Of the 75 registered practitioners in the Colony, 42 are now members of the local branch. Membership is granted to all medical practitioners who have qualified for registration in Mauritius including those with French qualifications ; the Branch is thus representative of the medical profession in the Island.

Close collaboration is maintained between Government and the profession, and the advice of the branch has been frequently sought by Government in connection with Development and Welfare and other needs of the community.

## PART III

### Chapter I: Geography and Climate

#### GEOGRAPHY

Mauritius is a small island of about 720 square miles situated in the Indian Ocean, between  $19^{\circ}58'$  and  $20^{\circ}32'$  South Latitude, and the meridians of  $57^{\circ}17'$  and  $57^{\circ}46'$  East Longitude. It is almost surrounded by fringing reef.

The northern part of the island is fairly flat. In the other regions, the land rises from the coastal plains to a central plateau. On the borders of this central plateau there are three main mountain ranges with rocky peaks rising to a height of 2,711 feet. Apart from the main mountain ranges, there are many other isolated hills and peaks. There are many small rivers in Mauritius, the longest being about 25 miles. Most of the rivers are fast-flowing owing to the steepness of the slope from the central plateau to the sea. Waterfalls are not uncommon. At the bottom of certain falls, there are power stations for the electricity supply of the island.

There are a few natural lakes in Mauritius and several reservoirs supply water for drinking purposes and irrigation.

Mauritius has two ports: Port Louis, in the north-west, the capital and business centre, and Mahebourg, the old capital, in the south-east.

Mauritius has a damp climate which varies considerably according to the locality. The heat in Port Louis and round the coast during summer is often oppressive; on the Central Plateau it is comparatively cool almost all the year round. Heavy rains fall in summer, though there is no regular rainy season. In winter, it is cold and wet in the higher parts but cool round the coast. The coast is remarkable for its beauty.

Mauritius is one of the most thickly populated places in the world. The population exceeds 425,000 and its density is about 600 inhabitants per square mile.

The chief industry of Mauritius is sugar which is the main export. Sugar canefields may be seen all over the Island. From hill tops the ground looks like an immense green lawn cut almost regularly by silver grey ribbons of roads. Other minor industries, such as aloe fibre, rum distillation and lime burning, keep a good number of people employed.

There are small areas of indigenous forests but large plantations of pine are made by the Forest Department to supply wood to factories and to provide timber for building purposes. All

round the coast there is a fringe of either casuarina or coconut trees.

Mauritius, being almost in the centre of the Indian Ocean is a comparatively isolated place. The Island is, however, situated almost at the crossing of the sea routes linking Australia, India and the East Indies with South Africa. Before the war steamers en route from the Far East to South Africa called regularly at Mauritius and the French ships which called at the neighbouring French colony of Réunion also called at Port Louis so that there was also a regular service with East African ports. During the war a modern air-port was built in the southern part of the island. There is at present a regular weekly air-service and communications with Europe have consequently much improved.

#### CLIMATE

Mauritius lies just within the tropics but it is a small land mass without any large land area in its vicinity. It has therefore a maritime climate, tropical maritime during summer and sub-tropical in winter.

This differs appreciably from the climate of a place on the same latitude in a large continent. Very high temperatures are not experienced in summer nor particularly low ones in winter and, except in localities at or near sea level and during occasional dry spells, rainfall is sufficient to maintain a green cover of vegetation throughout the year. On the other hand, owing to the high relative humidity, there are periods in summer, particularly when there is little or no wind, when considerable physical discomfort is felt even though the temperatures are not extremely high, especially at or near sea level.

The following is a summary of the main climatological features.

*Seasons.* The year can be divided approximately into two seasons; summer from November to April and winter from May to October, though April to June and September to November can be looked upon as transitional periods.

*Rainfall.* The average annual rainfall at or near sea level is 50 inches or less, the minimum being about 30 inches in the western and north-western coastal areas. The amount increases steadily with altitude and reaches nearly 200 inches on the highest part of the central plateau at about 2,000 feet above sea level.

Summer rainfall produces by far the larger proportion of the total for the year. The main source of the rain is tropical cyclones. When the centre of one passes over or close to the island the rainfall is very heavy, particularly when the cyclone moves very slowly. For example, in the cyclone of March, 1931, one locality recorded over 36 inches in 24 hours and 130 inches for the month.

The other important source of summer rainfall is instability

showers that develop during the day in calm, or nearly calm weather. These are of fairly short duration but are frequently extremely heavy.

Winter rainfall is mostly of an orographic nature produced by the lifting and cooling of the trade wind stream as it passes over the island. It is in the form of light rain or drizzle, most of which falls over the central area of high ground.

True droughts are rare except near sea level but very large deficiencies occur from time to time, particularly in summer months whenever there is little or no cyclone activity in this part of the South Indian Ocean.

**Temperature.** The mean temperature varies from 74°F at sea level to 67°F at 2,000 feet and the mean annual range is 11°F. The highest and lowest values recorded at the Observatory, 180 feet, are 94.8°F and 49.9°F respectively, and the minimum at 1,850 feet is 44.9°F. The mean daily range is 18.5°F.

**Humidity.** The mean relative humidity increases from 70 per cent at sea level to nearly 90 per cent at 1,850 feet. The lowest value recorded at the Observatory is 38 per cent. The mean daily range varies from 19 per cent in April to 31 per cent in November at 180 feet.

**Sunshine.** The average number of hours per day of bright sunshine is 7.8 at 180 feet and 7.0 at 1,400 feet.

**Winds.** During the winter months, with only brief occasional interruptions due to distant extra-tropical depressions, the island experiences steady south-east to east-south-east trade winds of moderate strength. From time to time they become fairly strong for a day or two but never reach gale force.

In summer the average direction of the trades becomes easterly and of light to moderate force, and interruptions are much more frequent. When they are due to depressions to the south the winds become very light, mainly north-west to north. When due to tropical cyclones gales from any directions may be experienced.

**Tropical Cyclones.** The island is in the region of maximum activity for tropical cyclones in the South Indian Ocean. These can be very severe, causing widespread damage to crops, trees and buildings. Fortunately cyclones of this destructive nature are relatively infrequent. Cyclones occur during the summer season, usually between November and May, with the greatest frequency of occurrence in January and February. They have been known to affect Mauritius slightly on rare occasions in September and October.

Over the period for which data are available, nearly 100 years, very severe cyclones have been rare, but, as in 1945, it is possible for the island to be struck by two destructive cyclones in a matter of weeks.

The highest average wind velocity so far recorded has been of the order of 90 miles per hour, with peak velocities of 180 miles per hour. The winds near the centre are, however, extremely gusty and this, as well as the torrential rain that occurs, adds considerably to the destruction caused.

## Chapter II: History of Mauritius

The island of Mauritius was probably visited both by Arabic sailors and by Malays during the middle ages; and on maps of about 1500 it appears with an Arabic name. During the early sixteenth century Portuguese sailors are presumed to have visited it several times, though no record of any actual Portuguese visit has yet been published. The Island appears on many sixteenth century maps with the Portuguese name of Cerne or Cirne.

Dutch sailors visited it first in 1598 and renamed it Mauritius after their ruler, and frequently re-visited it on their subsequent trading expeditions to the East Indies. First-hand accounts of these visits exist, and of visits by English, French and Danish ships, which called at Mauritius for water, food, and cargoes of ebony wood. An English trading company planned to occupy the island, but was forestalled in 1638 by a Dutch company, whose settlement lasted (with a gap from 1658 to 1664) until 1710. It was from Mauritius in 1642 that Tasman set out on his most important voyage of Australasian discovery. The Dutch settlers never numbered much over three hundred (adults, children and slaves all counted) and the most valuable of these were twenty or thirty farmers, rearing cattle, hunting, fishing, growing food crops and some tobacco. But the settlement never developed enough to produce dividends and the Dutch company finally abandoned it in 1710. The most noteworthy results of this Dutch occupation were the exploitation of the Island's great ebony forests and the extinction of the dodo, a bird peculiar to Mauritius and often mentioned by early seventeenth century travellers.

The French in 1715 claimed the Island and called it "Ile de France", but seem not to have settled any of their surplus Bourbon colonists there until 1722. In the interval, European pirates from Madagascar and ships of the British navy searching for the pirates were almost the only visitors to the deserted island.

From 1722 till about 1767 Mauritius was governed by the French East India Company and from 1767 to 1810 by officials appointed by the French government. The population was already nearly one thousand (two hundred of them Europeans) in 1785, and from the governorship of the great Labourdonnais onwards increased rapidly, reaching nearly twenty thousand in 1767 (fifteen thousand of them slaves). Much of the land was

divided into concessions of a quarter mile by a mile (approximately), and most of these were farmed : coffee, manioc, maize, vegetables, fruit, indigo, cloves and sugar were among the crops grown. There was some rearing of poultry, goats and cattle. Port Louis, the capital, was a lair of speculators and adventurers, desirous of returning to Europe as soon as possible. During the wars of the eighteenth century, (Austrian Succession War, Seven Years' War, War of American Independence), the island became a naval depot, supplying French fleets fighting the British in the Indian Ocean and the pivot of ambitious French schemes to drive the British out of their Indian trading settlements. It was also a port of call for several expeditions (notably that of Bougainville), and was described by many French travellers, including Bernadin de Saint Pierre.

From 1767, under royal government, the population continued to increase, reaching 30,000 in 1777, 40,000 in 1787, and nearly 60,000 in 1797 (including 50,000 slaves from Madagascar and Africa). During the French revolution the inhabitants of Mauritius set up a government virtually independent of France, and organised very successful and damaging raids on English commerce whenever England and France were at war. These raids continued while Decaen (one of Napoleon's generals) was governor, until in 1810 a strong British expedition, long planned and often postponed, was sent to capture the Island. Bourbon and Rodrigues were also occupied by the British in 1810, but by the treaty of Paris in 1814 Bourbon was given back to France. Mauritius and its dependencies, including Rodrigues and Seychelles, were then finally ceded to Great Britain.

Many English officials were brought in as well as a large garrison of several regiments. This was reduced by 1870 to half a battalion, and after 1914 reduced still further. Few English merchants and private persons settled in Mauritius, whose European population remained mainly French in language and sentiment. After 1825 the island flourished, especially through sugar exported to England, the crop increasing from 14,000 tons in 1823 to 34,000 tons in 1833. During these early years the English government's suppression of the slave trade and then its plans to free the slaves were fiercely opposed in Mauritius. Two million pounds sterling were paid to slave owners for their slaves, and new labourers were brought in from India instead to work in the fields. The population, which in 1835 had reached 100,000 (three-quarters of them slaves), had by 1861 risen to 300,000, nearly 200,000 of them being immigrants from India, most whom remained to settle in Mauritius. After 1880 far fewer immigrant labourers were brought in, and the census of 1944 showed that the population had in the last eighty years increased but not greatly altered racially : 265,000 Indians out of a total of 419,000.

With the assistance of immigrant labourers, imported fertilisers,

improved methods and richer canes, the sugar crop rose to 70,000 tons in 1853, 150,000 tons by 1900, and in 1946 reached 300,000 tons. For the sake of sugar, forests were cut down, Indians brought in, reservoirs and irrigation schemes carried out, new government departments set up, technicians trained. As Joseph Conrad wrote : "First-rate sugar cane is grown there. All the population lives for it and by it. Sugar is their daily bread."

Other industries were sporadically encouraged and normally neglected. After the slaves had been freed, much less food was grown locally, and more was imported, especially rice from India. This became the staple food of the population and so remained except when in the 1939-1945 war imported flour and local crops had to replace it. When boom prices were being paid for sugar after the 1914-1918 war, various minor industries, including tea-bricks and tiles, tobacco, aloe-fibre bags and government dairying were developed.

One side of Mauritian history concerns the cyclones, epidemics and pests, which from time to time upset its economy. In the 1850's there were epidemics of cholera and in the 1860's five years of epidemic malaria, which caused thousands of people, including almost all the fairly well-to-do, to desert Port Louis and the coastal districts for the higher healthier parts of Plaines Wilhems. Curepipe, a scattered village in 1865, was by 1895 large enough to have a town board nominated annually by the governor; and by 1944 was a town of over 20,000 people.

The district of Plaines Wilhems, which in 1851 had 14,000 inhabitants, grew to 75,000 in 1921 and 120,000 in 1944. The cyclone of 1892, in which 1,200 persons were killed; the epidemic of surra in 1902, which killed off all the draught oxen and caused sugar estates hurriedly to import light railways; bubonic plague, from 1899; the phytalus smithi which was in 1911 found to be attacking the sugar cane; the 1919 epidemic of influenza; the spread of malaria during the 1930's into the hills and higher districts; finally three cyclones and a serious outbreak of infantile paralysis in 1945; these modern misfortunes are typical of the island's history.

### *Finance*

When sugar prices were high and the island was prosperous, living conditions were improved in various ways. The sanitation of Port Louis was at last after much discussion improved in the 1890's. Sir Ronald Ross's visit of 1908 led to useful anti-malarial works during the next twenty years. Reservoirs at Mare-aux-Vacoas (1893-5), La Ferme (1918), and La Nicolière (1924) brought irrigation and domestic water to private houses and to sugar estates in several districts. Child welfare and similar organisations developed in the war years. After expert inquiries in 1921, the water supply of Port Louis was greatly improved, and the port itself was somewhat modernised. More money was spent on education in

the 1940's. Before 1937, government revenue had come mainly from taxes on goods entering or leaving the island, and on various local products. A poll tax on incomes was introduced and within ten years was almost doubling the government revenue.

When sugar prices were low (and climatic difficulties were then usually discouraging), the island had occasionally to raise loans or obtain grants from London. This happened in 1892; again in 1908, when there was a royal commission of inquiry under Sir Frank Swettenham sent out from England; again in 1930, when government expenditure on public works and on salaries was cut down; and once more in 1945.

#### *Recent Wars*

During the wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, many Mauritians went overseas to serve in the armed forces. During the first war Mauritius suffered very little, goods not becoming scarce for some years; but in the second war food ran very short and at one time in 1942 a Japanese attack, as a sideshow to an occupation of Madagascar, was regarded as inevitable. Later in the war the garrison was reinforced with African troops; the harbour of Grand Port after years of oblivion was used as an auxiliary naval base and a permanent aerodrome was built near Mahebourg. The civil service, always numerous in Mauritius, expanded still further during the war years, and came to control an increasingly large sphere of human activities; permits for exports and imports, requisitioning of houses and other property, conscription for military service, rationing of various foods and commodities, fixing of retail prices, and so on.

The introduction into Mauritius of various modern inventions was gradual and rather belated. Electric light was used in Port Louis hospital in 1885; in Curepipe streets in 1893, but not in the streets of Port Louis till 1909. The first gramophone brought to Mauritius was played in 1894, and the first cinematograph was introduced in 1897. X-rays were first used in the government hospital in 1898. The Island was joined by cable to Seychelles in 1898, to Australia and Natal and Rodrigues in 1901, and to Bourbon in 1906. The railways date from 1860, but the telephone system as recently as from 1912. Domestic sanitation is equally recent, and remains primitive in most homes. Cycle-racing tracks were opened in 1902. Before 1914 motor-cars were rare; but by 1939 numbered over 8,000 (1,000 of these being lorries, taxis or buses). During the war, when petrol became scarce, a new local industry developed, that of making power alcohol for motor-cars from sugar-cane molasses. An aeroplane first landed in Mauritius in 1922, and radio stations, naval first, then private, and later governmental, date from about the same time.

## Chapter III : Administration

The Government of Mauritius is vested in a Governor with an Executive Council and a Council of Government. The Council of Government was first established in 1825. It consisted of the Governor and four officials. The following year the constitution was amended and a Council including unofficial members was introduced. This Constitution provided for a Council of Government composed of certain officers of the Crown and of an equal number of other persons to be taken from the chief landed population and principal merchants of the Colony ; seven officials and several unofficials were accordingly appointed.

The constitution was again amended in October, 1885. The Council of Government, under the revised constitution, was composed of the Governor, eight ex-officio members, nine members nominated by the Governor and ten members elected by the population : of the latter, two represented the town of Port Louis the capital of the Island, and the remaining eight the rural districts. At least one-third of the nominated members were to be persons not holding any public office.

The constitution was further amended in July, 1933, by laying it down that the proportion of the nominated members of the Council who are to be unofficials should not be less than two-thirds and, although no provision to that effect is made in the Letters Patent, the nominated unofficial members have been allowed a free vote on all occasions. The new Letters Patent, however, provide that the Governor shall have the power to enact legislation considered by him to be essential in the interests of good government. Debates in the Council may be held either in English or French.

The constitution of the Executive Council which was hitherto composed of the Governor and four ex-officio members was amended at the same time, and the former practice of appointing unofficial members to the Council was revived.

Four official and three unofficial members now serve on the Council.

The number of registered electors on the 31st December, 1946, was 11,844. Every male person who is qualified as follows is entitled to be registered as a voter :

- (1) has attained the age of 21 years ;
- (2) is under no legal incapacity, and is in possession of his civil rights ;
- (3) is a British subject by birth or naturalization ;
- (4) has resided in the Colony for at least three years previous to the date of registration, and possesses one of the following qualifications :—

- (a) is the owner of an immoveable property of the annual value of Rs. 300 ;
- (b) is paying rent at the rate of at least Rs. 25 a month ;
- (c) is the owner of moveable property within the Colony of the value of at least Rs. 3,000 ;
- (d) is the husband of a wife, or the eldest son of a widow, possessing any one of the above qualifications ;
- (e) is in receipt of a yearly salary of at least Rs. 600 or of a monthly salary of at least Rs. 50 ; and
- (f) is paying licence duty to the amount of at least Rs. 200 a year.

The life of a Council is five years but that of the present one which dates back to 1936 has been extended three times, at first owing to the war and recently in view of the impending change in the constitution.

The head of the Civil Service is the Colonial Secretary who is also the Governor's chief adviser on administrative and political matters, while the Financial Secretary advises on financial policy.

The town of Port Louis is administered by a Municipality which was constituted under Ordinance No. 16 of 1849. The first elections took place in February, 1850, eighteen Councillors being returned at an annual election for the town as a whole. Minor changes were effected in 1851 and 1888.

In 1908 the town was divided into four wards, three Councillors being returned for each ward, Salary earners were excluded from the right to vote but this right was restored to them in 1923, the ward system being abolished and twelve Councillors elected for the town as a whole. The number of registered electors on the 31st December, 1946, was 3,677.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected by the Council subject to confirmation by the Governor.

Four towns of Plaines Wilhems district are administered by Boards of Commissioners established and constituted as follows :

Curepipe ...	Ordinance No. 12 of 1889 ...	Chairman and five members
Beau Bassin and Rose Hill	Ordinance No. 31 of 1895 ...	Chairman and seven members
Quatre Bornes ...	Ordinance No. 32 of 1895 ...	Chairman and five members

All the members are nominated annually by the Governor.

A start in rural government was made in October, 1946, by the appointment of a Civil Commissioner for the south of the Island. Provision has also been made for the appointment of a second Civil Commissioner.

Mr. J. B. Swinden, in 1945, prepared and published a report on Local Government. His report, which deals with the Municipality of Port Louis, the township boards and rural government has been

referred to a select committee appointed by the Governor in April 1946.

The administration of Justice rests with the Supreme Court and District Courts. The jurisdiction of the latter is vested in a magistrate who deals with most of the criminal matters and is empowered to sentence an accused party to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for one year, and to payment of a fine not exceeding 1,000 rupees.

Certain offences can only be tried by an intermediary court consisting of a bench of three magistrates who can sentence to penal servitude for three years and to payment of a fine not exceeding 3,000 rupees.

Other offences, such as murder, manslaughter, arson, rape, must be tried by the Assize Court where one of the judges of the Supreme Court presides, the verdict being returned by a jury of nine men ; the decision must be that of at least seven out of the nine members.

In the case of offences triable at the Assize Court a preliminary enquiry is first held by a magistrate who commits the accused to stand trial.

Magistrates also have jurisdiction in civil cases when the subject matter does not exceed one thousand rupees in value. They hold judicial enquiries in the case of violent or accidental death or of fire. In addition they deal with certain matters in chambers.

The Supreme Court is composed of a Chief Justice, two Puisne Judges and the Master and Registrar who is also the judge in Bankruptcy. This Court deals with civil cases when the subject matter exceeds one thousand rupees in value. The judges also preside over the Assize Court the jurisdiction of which has already been outlined.

The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction in divorce and judicial separation and decides on certain questions submitted to it by way of motion. It is the Appellate Court for decisions given by magistrates.

An appeal lies to the Privy Council from decisions of the Supreme Court involving a pecuniary interest of 10,000 rupees or more. The Privy Council can also accede to a petition for appeal in other matters.

## Chapter IV : Weights and Measures

The metric system is in general use in the Island of Mauritius and the following French and local measures are still to be found :

*Measures of Length and Area*

1 ligne française	=	2.258 milimetres or 0.088 inch
12 lignes	=	1 French inch
12 French inches	=	1 French foot
1 French foot	=	1.06 English feet
1 lieu	=	2½ English miles (approximately)
1 gaulette	=	10 French feet
1 arpent	=	40,000 square French feet or 1.04 acres
1 toise	=	6 French feet or 2 yards 4 inches

*Measures of Capacity*

1 barrique	=	50 gallons (cane juice, etc.)
1 tiercon	=	190 to 192 litres (molasses)
1 velte	=	7.45 litres (coconut oil)
1 bouteille	=	800 cubic centimetres (liquid)
1 chopine	=	½ bouteille
1 corde	=	80 French cubic feet or 96.82 English cubic feet (firewood)

*Measures of Weight*

1 gamelle	=	5.250 kilogrammes
1 livre	=	500 grammes or 1.10 English pounds

Weights, measures and scales are controlled by the Police throughout the Colony. The only alteration in the pre-war system was introduced by the passing of Ordinance No. 47 in the year 1941, whereunder the control of weighbridges on Sugar Estates was taken over by the Central Board.

The Police control over weights and measures was to a certain extent relaxed during the war years when the Police had to deal with multifarious wartime duties, but since 1944 vigorous action has been taken to control fraud.

The following gives an idea of the improvement in the work done :

Year	Total number of weights, measures and scales seized and forfeited				
1936	...	...	...	...	78
1937	...	...	...	...	54
1938	...	...	...	...	38
1939	...	...	...	...	97
1940	...	...	...	...	72
1941	...	...	...	...	72
1942	...	...	...	...	76
1943	...	...	...	...	40
1944	...	...	...	...	361
1945	...	...	...	...	515
1946	...	...	...	...	877

The number of weights, measures, scales, etc., stamped by the Police every year average 20,000, and the amount of duty collected thereon is approximately Rs. 4,000.

## Chapter V : Newspapers and Periodicals

Name	Proprietors or Publishers	Editor	Language	Remarks
<b>DAILY NEWSPAPERS :</b>				
Apres Midi, L'	Gaston, Pierre	Gaston, Pierre	French	
Cerneen-Mauricien-Advance	Cerneen, Ltd., Hon. Raoul Rivet, The Mauritius Free Press Service Co., Ltd.	Herve de Sornay, Hon. Raoul Rivet, A. Bechadur.	French	A combined paper published conjointly since April, 1942.
Chinese Commercial Paper	Wong-Soo-Kiew Li-Pak-U	Wong-Soo-Kiew Li-Pak-U	Chinese Chinese	
Chinese Daily News	H. K. Naudeer	H. K. Naudeer	English	
New Era	Dr. E. Millien	Dr. E. Millien	French	
Oeuvre, L'	Hon. Raoul Rivet	Joseph Gerard	French	
<b>WEEKLY PAPERS :</b>				
Jagriti Aryavir	I. Moothien	Pandit Cashinath and Pandit Balram Herve de Sornay	English and Hindi	
Planters Gazette	Herve de Sornay	Louis Hein	English and French	
Vie Catholique, La	Union Catholique		French	
<b>MONTHLY, QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL :</b>				
Annales Catholiques	Union Catholique	H. de Sornay	French	Monthly, Roman Catholic.
Breeders' News, The	The Mauritius Breeders Club	—	English	Monthly, Animal husbandry, farming, etc.
Bulletin Annuel de la Societe de l'Histoire de l'Ile Maurice	Societe de l'Histoire de l'Ile Maurice	The Secretary	French	Local History.
Cahiers Mauriciens	Societe des Ecrivains Mauritians	Clement Charoux	French	Quarterly, Literary.
Calendrier du Diocese de Port Louis	Union Catholique	—	French	
Church Magazine Dawn	E. Chong-Kwan	Bishop of Mauritius E. Chong-Kwan	Annual, English English and French	Annual, Roman Catholic.
				Monthly, Church of England.
				Monthly, China and the Chinese.

## MONTHLY, QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL:

Name	Proprietors or Publishers	Editor	Language	Remarks
Dioecesan Quarterly Magazine Easor	Bishop of Mauritius	Bishop of Mauritius	English	Quarterly, Church of England.
Cercle Litteraire de Port Louis	Arthur Martial	French	Bi-Monthly, Literary.	
Indian Cultural Review	Dr. S. Ramgoolam	English and French	Quarterly, Indo-Mauritian Community.	
Indian League	Indian League	English	Bi-Annual. Indian affairs.	
Mauritius Almanac	Mr. Andre Bax	English	Indo-Mauritian Community Annual Commercial and Statistical Guide, 1941.	
Mauritius Institute Bulletin	Mauritius Institute Curator and Librarian	French or English	Scientific. Papers on flora and fauna of Mascarenes.	
Mauritius Quarterly Directory	Mr. A. Pitot	English	Quarterly, General information.	
Messager Mauricien	Adventist Church	French	Monthly, Seventh Day Adventist.	
Misbahul Islam	Hajee Issa Issack	C. I. Atchia	Urdu and Gujarati	Islam, Moslem Community.
Moslem Youth Bulletin	Moslem Youth Brigade	A. C. D. A. Ramzan	Quarterly, Organ of Moslem Youth Brigade.	
Revue Agricole de l'Ile Maurice	Joint Board: Society of Chemists, Chamber of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture	P. O. Wiehe	Bi-Monthly. Sugar Industry and Agricultural Science.	
Revue Artistique Revue de Marie	J. I. Tranquille Mrs. Raoul Oliverry	French	Monthly, Literary.	
Roshnee	Anjuman Hifazatry Islam Society of Mauritius	Tayoob Ayoob	Monthly, Roman Catholic Religious. Sociology, Moslem Community.	

## **Chapter VI: Bibliography**

**A new edition of the Laws of Mauritius has been prepared by His Honour Sir Charlton Lane, Chief Justice of Mauritius, and is now being printed in England.**

**The yearly publication of the Law Reports by His Honour the Chief Justice has been continued throughout the war.**

**This year the Government has taken steps for the publication of a most interesting Digest of the reported decisions of the Supreme Court of Mauritius for the years 1926 to 1943 by Mr. Gerard Lalouette, Barrister-at-Law.**

**This work will prove most helpful to the legal profession.**

## APPENDIX I

### LIST OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
Memorandum by the Governor (Sir Donald Mackenzie-Kennedy, K.C.M.G.) on the Development and Welfare Organisation.	1944
Report on Health Conditions in Mauritius by Dr. A. Rankine, M.C.	1944
Memorandum on the Colonial Development and Welfare Act and on Schemes already submitted.	1945
Progress Report No. 1.	1945
Inaugural Meeting of the Central Development and Welfare Committee.	1945
Milk Production and Distribution. Creameries and Ghee Refineries, Demonstration Poultry Farm. Lard Factory, 1944.	1945
Pine Plantations in Mauritius—Working Plan. Report by H. C. King.	1945
Co-operation in Mauritius—Report by W. K. H. Campbell, C.M.G.	1945
Statement of Financial Implications of Proposed Health and Education Services.	1945
Memorandum embodying suggestions for financing the proposed Health and Education Services.	1945
Education Services including Training College.	1945
A scheme for a Teachers' Training College and attached Schools.	1945
Report on Sanitary conditions affecting an outbreak of Poliomyelitis in Mauritius by Dr. Kenneth Martin and Mr. J. S. Stirton.	1945
Memorandum on Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Mauritian Ex-servicemen by Major A. E. de Chazal, O.B.E., M.R.C.P., M.S., F.R.C.S.	1945
Irrigation Proposals.	1945
Mauritius Hemp Industry.	1945
Report on the Industrial Development Advisory Committee.	1945
Pine Plantations in Mauritius—Working Plan (Revision) by H. C. King.	1945
Memorandum by Dr. the Honourable A. E. de Chazal on Proposed Scheme for Improvement and Expansion of the Medical and Health Services in Mauritius.	1946
A small scale experiment in the use of D.D.T. in Mauritius by H. D. Tonking, R. Lavoipierre and C. M. Courtois.	1946

*Title*

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
An essay on Housing, Urban and Rural Planning with special reference to Mauritius by R. Lavoipierre.	1946
Report on a visit to Trinidad, Louisiana and other countries by P. O. Wiehe.	1946
Report on Estate Housing, Slum Clearance and Town and Regional Planning in the Island of Mauritius —First Report by P. M. Aldred.	1946
Second Meeting of the Central Development and Welfare Committee.	1946
Revised Memorandum on Mauritius Development and Welfare Ten Year Plan.	1946
Report on the Tea Industry of Mauritius by Captain E. G. B. de Mowbray, C.B.E., R.N. (retd.)	1946
Milk Production and Distribution : Steps to implement recommendations of the 1944 Report by a Subcommittee of the Mauritius Breeders' Club.	1946
Report on the possibilities of composting urban refuse in Mauritius.	1946

**APPENDIX II****LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO MAURITIUS AND ITS DEPENDENCIES**

<i>Title</i>	<i>Publishers or Agents for Sale</i>	<i>Price</i>
T'Eylandt Mauritius, 1598-1710. By Albert Pitot.*	Out of Print	—
L'Ile de France, 1715-1810. (Esquisses Historiques). By Albert Pitot.	do.	—
L'Ile Maurice, 1810-1833. Three volumes. By Albert Pitot.*	do.	—
The History of Mauritius or the Isle of France. (London, 1801). By Charles Grant, Viscount de Vaux.*	do.	—
Views in the Mauritius. (London, 1837). By T. Bradshaw and William Rider.	do.	—
Subtropical Rambles in the land of the Aphanapteryx. (London, 1873). By Nicolas Pike.	do.	—

<i>Title</i>	<i>Publishers or Agents for Sale</i>	<i>Price</i>
Mauritius. Records of Private and of Public Life 1871-1874. Two volumes (Edinburgh, 1894, privately printed). By Lord Stanmore.	Out of Print	—
Le Patois Creole Mauricien. (Mauritius, 1880). By Charles Baissac.	do.	—
Le Folk-lore Mauricien. (Maison-neuve, Paris, 1888). By Charles Baissac.	do.	—
Statistiques de l'Ile Maurice et ses Dependences. Three volumes (Mauritius, 1886). By Baron d'Unienville.*	do.	—
Renseignements pour servir à l'histoire de l'Ile de France et ses Dépendances. (Mauritius, 1890). By Adrien d'Epinay.	do.	—
Ile de France—Documents pour son Histoire Civil et Militaire. (Mauritius, 1925). By Saint Elme le Duc.*	do.	—
Mauritius Illustrated. (London, 1914). By A. Macmillan.*	do.	—
L'Ile Maurice. (Mauritius, 1921). By W. Edward Hart.*	do.	—
Island of Mauritius. (Mauritius, 1928). By Raymond Philogene.*	do.	—
Sea Fights and Corsaires of the Indian Ocean. (Mauritius, 1934). By H. C. M. Austen, C.B.E.	do.	—
Port Louis—Deux Siecles d'Histoire, 1735-1935. (Mauritius, 1936). By A. Toussaint.	The author, Curepipe, Mauritius.	1st edition Rs. 25 2nd edition Rs. 8
Financial situation of Mauritius ; Report of a Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, December, 1931.*	Out of Print	—

*Title*

<i>Title</i>	<i>Publishers or Agents for Sale</i>	<i>Price</i>
Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Unrest on Sugar Estates in Mauritius, 1937.	Government Printing Office, Mauritius, & Crown Agents for the Colonies.	Rs. 5
Report of Commission of Enquiry into the disturbances which occurred in the North of Mauritius in 1948.	Government Printing Office, Mauritius.	Rs. 2.50
Final Report on Census in Mauritius, 1944. By M. Koenig.	Government Printing Office, Mauritius.	Rs. 5.00
The Island of Rodrigues. (London, 1923). By A. J. Bertuchi.	Out of Print	—
Dans les "Ziles La-Haut", Archipel de Chagos. (Mauritius, 1937). By Fr. Dussercle.	do.	—
L'Ile d'Aigle—Naufrage de la Barque Diego. (Mauritius, 1936). By Fr. Dussercle.	The General Printing & Stationery Co., Ltd.	Rs. 2.50
A School Geography of Mauritius. (Mauritius, 1945). By R. H. Ardill.	Government Printing Office, Mauritius.	Rs. 1
La Pluie a l'Ile Maurice. (Mauritius, 1935). By Marc Herchenroder.	The General Printing & Stationery Co., Ltd.	Rs. 8.00
Report on the Anophelinae of Mauritius and on certain aspects of Malaria in the Colony. By Malcolm E. MacGregor.*	Medical & Health Department (Mauritius).	15s. 0d.
Report on Medical and Sanitary matters in Mauritius. (Mauritius, 1921). By Andrew Balfour, C.B., C.M.G., M.D., B.Sc., F.R.C.P.E., D.P.H.*	Government Printing Office, Mauritius.	Rs. 15
Guide Pratique et Moderne du Petit Eleveur Mauricien. (Mauritius, 1948). By Dr. J. Main-gard, Antoine Darne et Capt. F. Wilson.	The Standard Printing Establishment, Mauritius.	Rs. 5

<i>Title</i>	<i>Publishers or Agents for Sale</i>	<i>Price</i>
Flora of Mauritius and the Seychelles (London, 1877). By J. G. Baker.	Out of Print	—
The Grasses of Mauritius and Rodriguez. (London, 1940). By C. E. Hubbard and R. E. Vaughan.	Crown Agents for the Colonies.	4s. 6d.
The Sugar Industry of Mauritius (London, 1910). By A. Walter.	Out of Print	—
La Cane a Sucre a l'Ile Maurice (Mauritius, 1920). By P. de Sornay.	The General Printing & Stationery Co., Ltd.	Rs. 10
The evolution of Sugar Cane Culture in Mauritius. (Mauritius, 1937). By A. North-Coombes.	do.	Rs. 8
Mauritius and the War. (Mauritius, 1940). Published by the Indian Cultural Association.	do.	Rs. 5.00
La Maison de France. Ile Maurice 1941-1946. (Mauritius, 1946).	do.	Rs. 5.00
Grains de Sable. (Mauritius, 1946). By Georges P. Pitot.	do.	Rs. 2.50
L'Ile Maurice. Guide Illustre. (Mauritius, 1936). By C. Charoux.	do.	Rs. 1.50
Mauritius Almanach and Commercial Handbook. By Andre Bax.*	do.	Rs. 10.00
Itinerary of Roads in Mauritius with Map (Bombay, 1925). By F. Marc Desbleds.	Government Printing Office, Mauritius.	Rs. 7.50

## MAPS

The Mauritius Atlas (London).	Collins-Longmans	8s. 6d.
Map of Mauritius (Quarter-inch to the mile).	The General Printing & Stationery Co., Ltd.	Rs. 0.25
Ordnance Survey Map (Six sheets ; one inch to the mile).	E. Stanford, Ltd., London.	15s. 0d.

\* May be consulted in the Colonial Office Library.

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